



# **CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

## **DESIGN ADVICE LETTER**

**PRE-DA 2/2023 - COMPASS CENTRE, 83-85 AND 99 NORTH TERRACE, BANKSTOWN**

**DRP SESSION 2: 22 FEBRUARY 2024**

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Compass Centre, 83-85 &amp; 99 North Terrace, Bankstown</b>
<b>Application No.:</b>	<b>PRE-DA-2/2023</b>
<b>DRP session date:</b>	<b>22 February 2024 – Second Review</b>
Panel Members:	Tom Rivard (Chair) Peter St Clair
Council Resources:	Leisha McCarthy (Panel Secretariat) Bruno Pelucca (Senior Urban Designer)
Observers:	Camille Lattouf (Manager, City Strategy and Design) Hend Sameh (Team Leader, Urban Design) David Pistre (Urban Designer) Rui Liu (Urban Designer) Francisco Mota (Digital Urban Designer) Stephen Arnold (Coordinator Planning West) Ian Woodward (Manager Development)
Apologies:	None
Declarations of Interest:	None
Site visit:	Site inspections were undertaken by the Panel Members and Council Resources prior to the first review session
<b>Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the Panel:</b>	Costa Dimitriadis, (Senior Urban Planner) Ethos Urban Joseph Ajaka (Project Director) Barings Aston Weber (Development Manager) Barings Cameron Hay (Associate Director) Essence Project Management Simon Parsons (Practice Leader) PTW Alex Lin (Director) PTW Ross Shepherd (Partner / Director) Site Image Angela Bonnefin (Founder and Director) Retail Strategy Group Sam George (NSW Region Manager Urban Solutions) Hatch  <u>Observers – Joined meeting online</u>  Warwick Dowler (Head of Residential) Barings Craig Sanders (Project Director) Essence Project Management Daniel Howard (Associate Director) Ethos Urban Grace Pelle-Lalli (Associate) PTW Catherine Love (Director) PTW Lewis Pang (Senior Associate) PTW Claira Kratochvil (Senior Landscape Architect) Site Image Teresa Pereira (Senior Associate) Hatch Vy Hoang (Senior Urbanist, Engagement) Ethos Urban Artur Chyra (Senior Urban and Architectural Designer, Urban Solutions) Hatch
Design Advice Letter issue date:	11 March 2024



## To the Applicant

Thank you for the opportunity to review and discuss the progress on the above project. The Panel appreciates the time, care and attention that the proponents have dedicated to refining the proposition, in response to the previous panel discussion and associated advice from 12 October 2023.

At that time, the Panel was supportive of the principal objectives of the proposal, and commended many of its urban, architectural and operational. The Panel requested further development and refinement of the proposal, with a focus on the following areas:

- Designing with Country approach
- Overall urban design response – context, connections, fine grain, program
- Sustainability – social, cultural, economic and environmental
- Landscape – quantity and quality of spaces
- Residential and civic amenity and uses
- Precinct access and connectivity (including vertical connections)
- Materials and detailing
- Built form and aesthetics

The Panel is appreciative of the clarity and comprehensiveness of the package of drawings and documents submitted, and the direct and productive engagement with Panel's previous advice. The Panel remains broadly supportive of the scheme and its ongoing resolution and offers a series of observations and recommendations to further refine the eventual outcomes of this development.

## Summary of advice

### PRINCIPLE 1 - Context and Place-Based Considerations

The applicants have provided a well-considered urban design report, that documents and analyses the context and its ongoing evolution and sets the design response directly within those findings. The relationships with the urban context are clearly illustrated, in the ground plane, overall site massing and in the long elevations. The latter were particularly convincing in establishing the "fit" of the project within its context.

The ground floor permeability, visibility and access are much improved, along with the potential clarity and legibility of the public domain and retail and hospitality spaces across the ground floor. The spatiality of the central connecting spine of Compass Way is also dramatically improved, as well as its relationship to the sky, and to the upper-level podium spaces.

Regarding the northeast corner, and the potential for this separate site to be developed in the future, the Panel suggests the proponents explore possible options, to pre-empt any development unfavourable to aspects of the current proposal, especially the spatial and visual relationship to Paul Keating Park from the north-facing spaces at ground and upper levels. Within the confines of the development site, a public stair connection linking the ground floor and the upper-level active use space should be considered.



## **PRINCIPLE 2 - Built Form and Scale**

The development exhibits both a fine grain relationship to specific aspects of the place, as well as presenting grand urban gestures to surrounding streets and public spaces. There is a clarity to the overall massing, composition and architectural expression, with three main elements reading distinctly: a ground-based, multi-level retail offering, a multi-level podium and the residential towers above. The proposed screens to the upper level car parking areas might have been too monolithic, but the Panel is confident that the proposed refinements to the screens on the basis of engagement with local and Aboriginal artists will give these screens much more three-dimensionality, local civic presence and unique qualities.

The proposed hotel tower is a dramatic presence at the corner of Fetherstone Street and North Terrace – this creates a highly visible landmark destination for arrivals from the train/metro station complex. Similarly, the podium addresses corner conditions clearly and boldly, as well as expresses access and entries into the central area and residential lobbies distinctly and in relation to existing and proposed streets and pedestrian access ways.

## **PRINCIPLE 3 - Density**

The ground floor and its network of retail and hospitality spaces are suitably dense but interlinked by relatively generous movement spaces. The cross-block residential lobbies are a good feature; ensuring that they also allow access to Compass Way will be an important consideration, and an important contribution to residential amenity, as well as public domain activation.

## **PRINCIPLE 4 - Sustainability**

Given the residential scenario (build to hold, or build to rent), the proponents should explore the prospect of aggregating some facilities and features into communal spaces. These could include spaces like a shared laundry, reducing the need for laundries in each unit, making them smaller and more affordable, while minimising utility use and reinforcing community interaction. Similarly, facilities like recycling and sorting rooms, a gardening room, a shared kitchen/dining space related to outdoor space, could all contribute to reducing private infrastructure in favour of generous community infrastructure.

Further consideration could be given to providing durable and low maintenance materials and climate controls to facades, selected upon their life-cycle performance and costs. As a significant BTR project in NSW, this site provides an opportunity to demonstrate the differences and merits of long-term management and ownership, in terms of building sustainability, including reduced maintenance, embodied energy and carbon reductions and enhanced energy efficiency/renewable energy sources.

## **PRINCIPLE 5 - Landscape**

The incorporation of deep planting zones at major access and entry points to the development is a strong improvement to the public domain landscape solution, allowing major trees to become established at these key areas.

The Country advice suggests expressing water in the landscape and across the site. This might be achieved by remembering the former water course under the current Appian Way, and applying the need to contain surface runoff, as an opportunity to have water on the surface, and within the landscape. The cross section suggests that the ground level slopes from the centre of Appian Way towards the site.

The “urban forest” nominated for the upper level of the podium could become a significant amenity, for both



residents and neighbouring properties. In section 3, the soil depth for the urban forest seems insufficient – it may be prudent (as with the ground floor deep soil areas) to eliminate a few carparking spaces below to allow the propagation of significant trees in this area. Clear, legible and safe access to the urban forest for residents should be incorporated. The wall (currently shown solid) between L2 parking and the urban forest should be an open screen, allowing some natural ventilation to the carpark, and increasing its future viability when converted to usable space.

The landscape concept of the vertical “gullies” is compelling and could be powerful civic spaces and urban gestures. Details should be provided of planter depths, widths, species selection, irrigation, drainage and access, to ensure that the lushness indicated in the imagery is exceeded by the reality of the deployed planting.

Level 2 communal outdoor space should be designed to include a bigger congregational space that might allow major community events: outdoor cinema screenings, tenant meetings, holiday parties, etc. Appropriate infrastructure (power, water, kitchen, chair and table storage, structure) should be included to allow ease of use.

#### **PRINCIPLE 6 - Amenity**

The drop off zone at the hotel entry (corner of Featherstone and North Terrace) requires some further refinement, especially in regard to coach standing areas. The configuration currently proposed may lead to parked coaches obstructing the view and access lines from North Terrace and the train station to the hotel. Options to stand coaches on Featherstone should be investigated. Similarly, the potential conflict of pedestrians, arriving guests with luggage, coaches and cars needs further development.

The scenario for future apartments wrapped around the proposed upper level is a forward-thinking solution, but can these spaces become something even more progressive, that might accommodate more diverse future uses? Could the two levels of parking be structured to allow different kinds of units: two story houses, work-live units (with servicing for clean-tech enterprises directly adjacent via remaining car parking), expanded multi-family “streets” aggregating multiple units, etc?

It may be challenging with existing car movements, but could there be a way to connect Level 1 “active use” to the external communal spaces at this level? A diagram of future vehicle movements might discover some possibilities. Similarly, can the Level 2 communal space be connected to external terraces?

The access to and viability of the upper-level retail and commercial spaces are still areas warranting further investigation, though the detailed retail strategy goes some way to substantiating the overall approach. These uses should be further explored and detailed and combined with subsequent development of the residential amenity spaces within the podium, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the overall activation of these upper levels. Diagrams indicating shifting uses (and users) over the 18-hour day would also help substantiate the viability of this network of spaces.

As noted previously, the podium levels, coupled with the prospective residential scenario and the ground level permeability, could become a rare example of genuine multi-level activation – the Panel is interested in any further work that ensures this prospect.

Cycle connectivity, bike parking and access to site and user-specific bike storage should be a key part of the public domain and movement strategies. The future Metro station will incorporate significant cycling facilities



(including storage and direct connections to district cycle networks) – this should inform the ground level considerations for providing cycle movements and associated infrastructure. Could a prototypical cycle-hub (micro café with cycling amenity (racks, air pump, water tap, repair facility) become an element within the ground floor retail strategy?

#### **PRINCIPLE 7 - Safety**

The network of upper level internal and external spaces is dispersed across the site, sometimes separated by physical elements or void spaces. While this does allow for a positively diverse range of spaces, activities and experiences, potential safety issues may arise from isolated spaces, single access spaces and obscured sightlines, especially in areas like the “urban forest.” Consideration should be given to these issues.

#### **PRINCIPLE 8 - Diversity and Social Interaction**

A good deal of the social activation of the site, both ground level and podium, relies on the retail strategy, and especially its evolution over time, as the context transforms, and local (and site) demographics evolve. As noted above on parking and vehicle movement evolution, it would be useful to have some indication of how retail, commercial, residential and external spaces at ground level and podium would be established, and how they might evolve over time. For example, the northeast corner of the upper level podium is shown as parking; elsewhere in the architectural plans a retail space is indicated. While this programmatic fluidity is part of the potential of the podium, activation strategies and embedded elements should point towards an increase in activity and diversity, and a move away from the monocultural storage of cars.

The podium demonstrates a high level of flexibility and thereby a potential for this to be realised, as programmatic, social and cultural diversity. However, opportunities for this diversity do not appear to extend in the same way, into the residential tower components above the podium. Further consideration should be given to providing a greater variety of dwelling typologies and sizes, to cater for the multi-cultural nature and inter-generational needs of Bankstown. In addition, adaptable apartment planning should be considered and demonstrated, that permits change over time to suit emerging BTR trends and markets.

The ground level retail strategy (and the associated spatial framework) should allow opportunities for small-scale speciality service retail spaces: key cutter, shoe repair, tailor, barber, provided this can be substantiated by localised demand. These micro spaces, catering to established customers and specific needs, can provide a way to populate spaces that would otherwise not be attractive to tenants seeking high visibility space.

The retail strategy notes the following considerations to be addressed: affordable and informal economies; collaborative spaces, function spaces (weddings, cultural and religious events) and working spaces. It also notes the area lacks a “family-friendly offering.” These intentions and observations could drive an approach to delivering spaces that are flexible (accommodating diverse uses), temporal (allowing occupation at diverse times of the day or week) and variable in size (from 5-square metre pop-up zones to more traditional 1-200m<sup>2</sup> long-term tenancies).

Part of the retail strategy as it develops should consider opportunities for Aboriginal businesses, including enterprises like a bush-foods café, cultural production spaces (radio, art, etc) and youth-oriented activities.

#### **PRINCIPLE 9 - Aesthetics**

The visual qualities of the building have been well considered where, for example, the residential entrances



within the podium align visually with the tower lobbies, providing a coherent building form and legibility from a distance. The articulation of the residential towers, on both the north and south elevations, have been well considered, introducing an intelligent, stepping of balconies, to clearly identify these significant street corners.

Compass Way has been defined by an elegant roof structure, now providing a greater sense of enclosure and civic presence. Further development of the transparent infill roof structure should be considered, to ensure the maximum level of weather protection for pedestrians to the full length of the central spine, while still achieving adequate natural ventilation for summer cooling. Similarly, the pedestrian awnings to the Appian Way should be continuous, and low enough to the ground to ensure protection from rain and downward winds. Care should be taken in the design and detailing of Compass Way and the roof structure, in a way that would be interpreted as universal or regional, and not culturally specific.

## Concluding remarks

The Panel reiterates their appreciation for the efforts to which the entire project team have gone to refine, develop and improve the proposal, and the eventual project. These efforts have resulted in significant improvements to the project and promise a potential development that could set a high standard for the nature of new developments in the centre of Bankstown.

The Panel remains confident that the design team will continue to make further positive refinements to the scheme, both in response to the Panel advice, as well as in subsequent design development of the project. Accordingly, the Panel does not feel the need to fully review the project again; however, we would be happy to review and discuss specific aspects of the project's evolution should the proponents care for further Panel advice.

Sincerely,

Tom Rivard

Chair - Canterbury Bankstown Design Review Panel



As part of the formal Development Application (DA) submission process, the Applicant is required to submit a Design Review Report.

# DESIGN REVIEW REPORT

[Design Review Panel \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://Design Review Panel (nsw.gov.au))

The Design Review Report (DRR) serves as a critical document in the assessment process for development applications. Prepared and issued by the Applicant, it outlines the design development process undertaken in response to the Design Advice Letter provided by the Design Review Panel. Here's a breakdown of its key components and purposes:

## 1. Purpose of the DRR:

- The DRR is a mandatory component of the Design Review Panel process and part of the development application procedure.
- It provides a summary of the design development process adopted by the Applicant.
- It showcases how the feedback and recommendations from the Design Review Panel have been incorporated into the design.
- It explains any deviations from the panel's advice and justifies why these changes are beneficial or still align with relevant design excellence principles.

## 2. Content of the DRR:

- The DRR may include simple diagrams and illustrations to aid in the explanation of design decisions.
- It outlines how the panel's advice has been integrated into the proposed development.
- It highlights areas where the design remains consistent with the panel's recommendations.
- In cases where the design deviates from the panel's advice, the DRR provides a detailed rationale for these departures and demonstrates how the alternative solutions are superior or still meet design excellence standards.

## 3. Utilization of the DRR:

- The DRR supports the application of relevant planning controls in a flexible manner, especially where the Design Review Panel identifies that this approach will lead to better outcomes.
- It serves as evidence of compliance with panel recommendations, strengthening the case for development approval.
- Conversely, it can be used to justify the refusal of development consent if the Applicant fails to incorporate the Design Review Panel's advice adequately.

Overall, the DRR plays a crucial role in ensuring that proposed developments align with design excellence principles and address the recommendations of the Design Review Panel, ultimately contributing to better urban design outcomes.

# DESIGN REVIEW REPORT TEMPLATE

The Design Review Report must be submitted by the Applicant as part of the development application procedure. It should summarise the design review process and provide a response to the Design Advice Letter provided by the Design Review Panel.



### Summary table

PROJECT TITLE		
Pre-DA NUMBER		
ADDRESS		
Design review panel session 1	Date	Panel members
Design review panel session 2	Date	Panel members

### Design Review Panel session 1

ADVICE NUMBER	DESIGN REVIEW PANEL ADVICE	DESIGN RESPONSE
1.1	Copy the exact advice from the design advice letter here.	The design response should aim to be as brief as possible. Refer to diagrams and drawings wherever possible.
1.2		
1.3		

### Design Review Panel session 2 (as required)

ADVICE NUMBER	DESIGN REVIEW PANEL ADVICE	DESIGN RESPONSE
2.1	It is recommended that the session number is used as the first digit in the numbering to make sure each piece of advice is identifiable.	
2.2		
2.3		