

**MINUTES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING
Thursday the 11th May 2023**

DEP PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Shaun Carter	Chairperson	CarterWilliamson Architects
Kim Crestani	Panel Member	Order Architects
Vishal Lakhia	Panel Member	Vishal Lakhia Architect

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:

Ray Taouk	Architect	FLDC Architects
Bernard Morez	Town Planner	BMA Urban

OBSERVERS:

Ariz Ashaf	Convenor / Acting Coordinator Citydesign	Liverpool City Council
Greg Mottram	Senior Planner	Liverpool City Council
James Martinez	Technical Administration Officer	Liverpool City Council

ITEM DETAILS:

Item Number: 2

Application Reference Number: DA-19/2023

Property Address: 73 Lachlan Street, Warwick Farm NSW 2170

Council's Planning Officer: Greg Mottram

Applicant: FLDC Pty Ltd

Proposal: Demolition of existing structures and construction of a three-storey centre based childcare centre over basement car parking accommodating 124 children

Meeting Venue: Microsoft Teams Meeting

1.0 WELCOME, ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND OPENING

The Chairperson introduced the Panel and Council staff to the Applicant Representatives. Attendees signed the Attendance Registration Sheet.

The Liverpool Design Excellence Panel's (the Panel), comments are to assist Liverpool City Council in its consideration of the Development Application.

The absence of a comment under any of the principles does not necessarily imply that the Panel considers the particular matter has been satisfactorily addressed, as it may be that changes suggested under other principles will generate a desirable change.

All nine design principles must be considered and discussed. Recommendations are to be made for each of the nine principles, unless they do not apply to the project. If repetition of recommendations occur, these may be grouped together but must be acknowledged.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

3.0 PRESENTATION

The applicant presented their proposal for DA-19/2023 - 73 Lachlan Street, Warwick Farm NSW 2170

4.0 DEP PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Although not a residential apartment building, the Panel's comments have been structured against the relatively universal design principles outlined in the NSW State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 (SEPP 65). These nine design principles are: 1] **Context**, 2] **Built Form + Scale**, 3] **Density**, 4] **Sustainability**, 5] **Landscape**, 6] **Amenity**, 7] **Safety**, 8] **Housing Diversity + Social Interaction**, 9] **Aesthetics**.

The Design Excellence Panel makes the following recommendations in relation to the project:

4.1. Context

- The Panel identified a number of fundamental concerns with the proposal arising primarily from a flawed site planning strategy that provides compromised street setbacks from both Sydney Road and Lachlan Street, and inadequate building separation distance from the side boundary. The applicant's approach appears to be driven by a child space maximisation rationale at the expense of – good architecture, urban design, landscape design, environmental design and amenity principles.
- The Panel further discussed the suitability of the proposed childcare centre use in such proximity to a NSW classified road (Sydney Road), particularly because noise and air quality concerns. A compromised highway setback further exacerbates the Panel's concerns regarding amenity achieved within the indoor and outdoor child spaces and play areas.
- A lack of consideration to the 8m landscaped setback required from Sydney Road (contrary to the guidance offered by the Liverpool DCP 2008) is problematic for the proposal. Furthermore, the required 4.5m setback from Lachlan Street is also partially compromised by the proposal. Given such a proposition and with lack of any urban

design rationale, the Panel does not support the proposal and considers it to be largely out-of-existing-character and inconsistent with the desired future character of the area.

- The Panel recommends that if the applicant chooses to continue with the proposed use at the subject site, then a more compact building footprint with DCP-compliant landscaped setbacks may better attempt to achieve an appropriate response to the site conditions. The Panel understands that as result, the number of child spaces would have to be substantially reduced in order to ensure compliance with the relevant childcare centre provisions for the indoor and outdoor unencumbered areas.
- As an alternative recommendation, the applicant should consider amalgamation with the adjoining property to the east (71 Lachlan Street), to achieve their expected child spaces, whilst achieving consistency with the relevant DCP setback controls, and the desired future character of the area.
- With regards to the overall site planning strategy, the adjacencies between the proposed pedestrian and vehicular driveway entries are problematic as these movements appear to be in conflict and raising safety concerns for pedestrian access. Furthermore, corner location of the vehicular driveway is counter-intuitive as it diminishes the street corner definition for the proposal.
- The Panel does not support the proposed location of the fire stairs being forward the building footprint of the main building presenting to Lachlan Street.
- The design of childcare centres for young children needs to be carefully considered and full of imagination, joy and care. These are not places to 'store' as many children as possible, but places that inspire, care and protect them. This should form the basis for your next design attempt for this site, including all other recommendations of these minutes.

4.2. Built Form + Scale

- The Panel questioned the applicant's strategy of creating extensive under-croft spaces and whether these spaces achieve required solar access in mid-winter. Furthermore, there are potential air quality and noise concerns for children within the outdoor areas located in close proximity to Sydney Road.
- The Panel notes the under-croft spaces currently lack resolution in terms of structural design and building services.
- The Panel is not convinced that a single lift provided with constrained lobby areas are adequate for comfortable and intuitive movement within the childcare centre given that a significant number of child spaces are proposed within 5 levels (including 3 childcare and 2 basement levels). Two lifts should be provided within the proposal to improve amenity for the children, staff members and carers/parents.
- All building services including fire stairs from basement, bin storage and the like should be designed to be contained within the building envelope. The location of fire stairs providing egress from the outdoor/under-croft areas is not desirable as it restricts mid-winter solar access and daylight to the outdoor play areas.

- The overall architectural expression appears cluttered, ill-considered and unresolved, and does not meet the standards of design excellence expected by the Panel.

4.3. Density

- The Panel does not support the proposed density including 124 child spaces and 20 staff members. In its current form and configuration, the proposal represents overdevelopment of the site, is driven by a child space maximisation rationale, and will not provide an appropriate environment for our young children to be in.

4.4. Sustainability

- The Panel expects the proposal incorporates the relevant sustainability measures including but not limited to the following:
 - Inclusion of large scale photovoltaic and battery systems;
 - Allocation of rainwater tank for storage and reuse to water landscaped areas;
 - Use of ceiling fans as a low-energy alternative.
 - Use low-carbon materials to construct the building.
 - Resilient and low water use endemic plants and landscape design.

4.5. Landscape

- The landscape design appears as an after-thought to the building design. Revised scheme should ensure proper coordination between both – building and landscape design, particular attention should be given to the design of outdoor play areas. Appropriate planting methods should be used to mitigate environmental impacts from Sydney Road.
- The Panel recommends significant reduction should be considered to the outline of basement carpark to allow large deep soil planting within the site. It is also the Panel's preference that deep soil areas be co-located with outdoor play areas, to allow planting of large canopy trees, shrubs and ground covers within the play areas.

4.6. Amenity

- There are fundamental amenity concerns for the proposed use; especially when we consider an appropriate environment for young children. These are already discussed within *Principle 1 Context & Neighbourhood Character* and *Principle 2 Built Form & Scale* of this Report.

4.7. Safety

- No discussion

4.8. Housing Diversity + Social Interaction

- No discussion

4.9. Aesthetics

- No discussion

5.0 OUTCOME

The Panel have determined the outcome of the DEP review and have provided final direction to the applicant as follows:

The proposal is not supported by the DEP and must return to the panel, with all feedback incorporated or addressed.

NOTE:

The Panel has not fully commented on several other architectural design, aesthetics, and NCC-compliance issues within the scheme considering these are lower-order issues in comparison with more fundamental issues which must be addressed as a priority.

The Panel considers the proposal, in its current form and configuration is not supported as it does not meet the standards or architecture, urban design, landscape design and amenity expected for achieving design excellence for a childcare centre within the Liverpool local government area.

The applicant should consider alternative site planning and urban design strategies to ensure that the childcare centre closely aligns with Council's 'community' aspirations, rather than a built form driven by a child space maximisation rationale at the expense of all else. If you are to persist with a childcare centre on this site, indoor and outdoor amenity for the children, pedestrian access and movement, indoor comfort, solar access, air quality, noise attenuation, and concurrently landscape design (ie: design excellence in all its forms) are required to be at the heart of the proposal.