

**MINUTES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING  
Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**DEP PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Lee Hillam     | Chairperson  |
| Alexander Koll | Panel Member |
| Vishal Lakhia  | Panel Member |

DunnHillam Architecture + Urban Design  
Mako Architecture  
Vishal Lakhia Architect

**APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:**

|                  |                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Nikita Mahapatra | Property Development Manager  |
| Jessica Thomas   | Senior Development Manager    |
| Wilson Wise      | Assistant Development Manager |
| Jordan Curran    | Architect / Partner           |
| Aram Lello       | Architect / Director          |
| Rob Loughman     | Landscape Architect           |
| Jonathon Joseph  | Principal Planner             |
| Tim Rogers       | Director – Transport Planning |

Woolworths Group  
Woolworths Group  
Woolworths Group  
ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects  
ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects  
Ground Link  
Planning Ingenuity  
Colston Budd Rogers & Kafes

**OBSERVERS:**

|                 |                                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Amanda Merchant | Panel Support Officer               |
| Di Wu           | Convenor / Snr Urban Design Advisor |
| Robert Micallef | Senior Planner                      |

Liverpool City Council  
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**ITEM DETAILS:**

**Item Number:** 3

**Application Reference Number:** DA-311/2024

**Property Address:** 495 Fourth Avenue, Austral

**Council's Planning Officer:** Robert Micallef

**Applicant:** Fabcot Pty Ltd

**Proposal:** Excavation and construction of a commercial development involving the provision of an anchor supermarket, commercial and retail tenancies, public piazza and through-site links, with at-grade and basement parking, associated landscaping and public domain works

**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 495 Fourth Avenue, Austral NSW 2179.

## **4.0 DEP PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

### **Context & Site Strategy**

- 1 The Panel commends the Project Team for a well-structured presentation.
- 2 There was extensive discussion regarding the significant variation from the desired future layout outlined in the Liverpool Growth Centre Precinct Development Control Plan (LGCP DCP). Major concerns raised include the compromised public through site link, plaza and the lack of consideration for the neighboring community center, the local park and a broader context (discussed further in the following sections).
- 3 Due to the absence of consideration of the immediate context, the Panel strongly recommends that the applicant incorporate a design response to future school sites, located to both the north and east, into their urban design analysis and placemaking strategies. Considering the likely demand for practical and convenient connections between the school drop-off areas and the supermarket pick-up area, these links should be a key consideration in the design process, especially in terms of site planning, the public space network, and desired pedestrian movement.  
It is noted that in Figure 11 of the SEE report (page 12), the proposed Master Plan for the Primary and Secondary School is illustrated. However, no design response to these plans is included in the presentation to the DEP.  
Detailed info regarding the School SSD can be found:  
<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/redevelopment-and-expansion-al-faisal-college-liverpool>
- 4 The Panel emphasises the importance of this development, as it is the first within the Gurner Avenue Neighbourhood Centre and highlights the need for careful consideration

of all interfaces with neighbouring sites. What is proposed for the subject site will have a direct impact on their future development potential. As a result, it is essential to adhere to the DCP's envisioned centre structure and public amenity. The current scheme falls short of achieving this DCP standard amenity in its present form.

**5 Connecting with Country strategy**

The Panel recommends that the landscape and site planning strategy acknowledge topography, endemic vegetation patterns and water flow across the site.

If the applicant would like to include indigenous style graphics or murals as part of their connecting to Country strategy a local artist with authentic connections to this place should be engaged to work on this element.

**Public Through Site Link & Plaza**

- 6 The panel do not support the downsizing of the DCP standard public through site link and the design treatment of it. The LGCP DCP Figure 3-4 illustrates a minimum of 8m wide pedestrian through site link, open to the sky (defined by the building lines), with the potential for double loaded active frontages, directly connecting Gurner Avenue and the future local street. The LGCP DCP envisions that this through site link is to be shared and activated with the adjoining community centre. However, the proposed development only provides a 1.5m wide thoroughfare along the common boundary.
- 7 The current scheme proposes a 6.5m wide internal mall fully enclosed within the development and covered by a roof structure. This does not comply with the requirements of the through site link, in position, scale or intent. This self-interested approach is not supported by the Panel, as it fails to function as a true public through site link, potentially allowing nighttime closures, redirecting pedestrian movement into the private development, and diminishing the desired visual connection from the public domain. The applicant must incorporate an accessible design solution adjacent to this link, ensuring public access does not rely on entering the private mall.
- 8 The Panel recommends that the next presentation include evidence of alternative design options for the layout of the secondary retail, activation of edges, loading dock location, through site link, and vehicle entry location. In addition to the above the Panel enquired if the proponent had undertaken a precedent study of similar sized plaza spaces, their function, activation and quantum of paving to soft landscaping. A precedent study of this type would be useful given that the scale of the plaza is reasonably modest in plan yet appears quite expansive in some of the imagery.
- 9 Considering above, the public amenity, benefit and development potential for neighbouring site are significantly compromised by the downsizing of the through site link. The applicant must revisit the design and demonstrate how the proposed development, along with the future community facility, will achieve the DCP standard or equivalent public amenity as outlined in the DCP.

**Southern Interface Treatment**

- 10 The Panel inquired how the proposed development would positively response to the future park, as it appears that the current design does not comply with the LGCP DCP,

which clearly requires developments in the centre to relate to the park located to the south, and the Figure 3-4 indicates a street defining building line at this location. The Panel acknowledges that the site is constrained by slopes but notes that the applicant chose to lower the site below the natural ground level for on-grade parking. This resulted in a significant retaining wall facing the future local street and park to the south. A lack of positive design response to the future park is a concern.

- 11 The applicant explains that the on-grade parking will not have an adverse visual impact on the future park due to dense boundary planting and its lower level. However, the current boundary planting area appears quite narrow and lacks sufficient deep soil, which will limit the growth of mature trees. Additionally, the Panel has been informed that the development includes about 46 surplus parking spaces. Considering this surplus and the need to maximise the deep soil zone (DSZ) as advocated by the applicant, the Panel emphasises that there are opportunities to expand the DSZ along the southern boundary. The Panel strongly recommends that the applicant revise the parking arrangement to establish a true DSZ, free of any underground structures.
- 12 By increasing the DSZ and re-arranging the car parking design, the applicant is required to comply with LGCP DCP Part 5.3.8 and ensure that the on-grade parking achieves that tree canopies can cover 50% of the car space surface area (excluding car park travel lanes).

#### **Active Frontages & Vehicular Access**

- 13 The Panel inquired whether commercial use or retail use are proposed along Gurner Avenue as discrepancies have been noted. The applicant confirmed that specialty retail is intended along the street frontage such as real estate agencies and mortgage brokers. Subsequent submissions must make the use of all spaces clear.
- 14 Considering the surrounding emerging residential character and desirable streetscape, the Panel recommends the applicant reconfigure the loading area, allowing more active uses along Fourth Avenue and the corner of Fourth Avenue and Gurner Avenue. This recommendation aligns with LGCP DCP.
- 15 The Panel emphasizes that in order to promote a 'High Street' character and a pedestrian friendly environment, particularly given the proximity to the plaza, vehicular entry should be avoided from Gurner Avenue. A single point vehicular entry along Fourth Avenue is highly recommended.

## **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.