

Design Review Panel Terms of Reference (March) 2023

PREPARED BY: Development Services



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1. PURPOSE

The role of the Design Review Panel (DRP) is to provide independent expert advice on the architectural merit of development applications to assist in achieving high quality urban design in the Sutherland Shire. The DRP will provide high quality expert advice addressing urban design, architecture and landscape architecture to ensure development proposals are achieving the 9 design quality principles of State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 – Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development (SEPP 65) (See Appendix 1) whilst taking into consideration any relevant policies and controls.

The Panel will provide input to identify ways designs can be improved to fit comfortably within their context, minimise impacts on adjoining properties and public space and are a high standard for the community and applicants. This process will also assist with achieving more streamlined development assessment timeframes.

2. TYPES OF APPLICATIONS TO BE REVIEWED

The DRP will provide high quality expert advice on the following categories of development applications referred to the DRP for review:

- Residential Flat Buildings
- Shop Top Housing
- Mixed Use Development
- Multi Dwelling Housing (Villa and townhouse developments – 7 units or more)
- Significant industrial, commercial, retail, residential and public buildings, dependent on their location, scale and whether they are visually prominent from the public domain, as determined by the Senior Manager, Development Services.
- Pre lodgement applications for SEPP 65 development.
- Modification applications that propose to modify a development that was considered by the panel will not be referred to the panel unless significant changes are proposed to the approved design.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The role and responsibilities of the panel and participants includes the following:

Panel Members

The DRP is a rotating roster of 4 independent members (from a pool of 7), one of whom will facilitate the role of chair. The panel will comprise of the following:

- Permanent Chairperson (external architect/ urban designer)
- Two external architects or urban designers
- One Landscape Architect (as required).

The panel will comprise of experts with extensive knowledge in their discipline including architecture, landscape architecture and urban design. Members must demonstrate experience and an understanding of good design and ability to provide high quality advice that will achieve good design outcomes and assist with the development assessment process. This advice is expected to be timely and accurate.

Panel chair

The panel chair is also a panel member and takes on additional responsibilities for the function of the panel. The panel chair facilitates the meeting, is responsible for ensuring meetings run on time and that all participants views are put forward. The chair ensures that quality and consistent verbal and written feedback is provided. The chair is responsible for the finalisation of the design advice letter.

Applicant Team

The applicant team is responsible for presenting a proposal to the panel with information including architectural plans, reports and any other relevant information that will assist the discussion. This enables the panel to provide quality advice ensuring that good design outcomes are achieved and to assist with the development assessment process.

Development Officer

The Development Officer responsible for the assessment of the application will review the information provided and identify any issues to be addressed and discussed with the panel. Following the meeting, the Development Officer will provide the design advice letter to the applicant and organise a meeting (if required) to discuss any matters further.

Design Review Panel Coordinator

Council's Design Review Panel Coordinator will organise meeting dates/times, will advise applicant of meetings and provide the assessment officer the final design advice letter from the panel.

4. INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

A design review panel briefing pack is distributed to panel members no less than 7 days prior to the design review panel meeting. The pack will comprise all relevant information including (but not limited to) architectural plans, reports and any other relevant documentation provided to Council at the time of lodgement. This may also include the following:

- Site maps
- Shadow diagrams
- Photomontage
- Colours and materials palette
- Detailed landscape plans
- Survey plan
- Google sketch up file
- A design statement (by the applicant) describing how each Design Quality Principle under SEPP 65 has been addressed.
- A compliance table that sets out the proposed developments compliance with relevant planning controls.

Printed plans are sent in A3 format to the panel via express post and electronic versions of the package are sent via secure transfer

5. PRE DRP APPLICATION

In addition, experience has shown that attending a DRP meeting prior to lodging a development application is beneficial to the assessment process. A pre-lodgement DRP meeting allows an applicant to present architectural plans and a brief outline of the proposal for the DRP's initial consideration and comments prior to the finalisation of detailed architectural, landscape and drainage plans. Should the DRP have fundamental concerns about site planning or the design concept, these matters can then be addressed before the applicant proceeds with the preparation of detailed plans for lodgement of a development application.

6. MEETING PROCEDURES

The design review panel meets fortnightly (as required) with up to 4 proposals reviewed by the panel per meeting day. The panel must have a minimum of 3 panel members in attendance to operate.

Councils' DRP coordinator will advise the location and times of the panel meetings or alternatively may carry out these meetings via Microsoft Teams.

Each meeting day allows time for the panel to carry out a site visit, a briefing by the Development Officer and Team Leader, a presentation by applicant/ design team and sufficient time for any questions by all attendees.

A typical DRP meeting day would follow the below format:

Time (subject to change)	
9:00am	Panel meets at Council administration building to begin site visits. Councils' development officer meets the panel on applicable site. (The applicant does not attend the site visits with the panel)
10:00am	Panel arrive back at Council to begin the first items meeting with Councils' Development Officer briefing the panel and discussing issues of the application
10:30am	Applicant team joins meeting and presents to the panel and discusses the application in detail and any relevant design points.
11:30am	Applicant leaves the meeting, and the panel debriefs and begins preparing the recommendations to be sent later in the design advice letter.
12:00pm	Short lunch
12:30pm	Items 2-3 to follow in the same process
4:30pm	Panel finishes and wraps up for the day

At the conclusion of the day the chair drafts recommendations as discussed throughout each meeting. Once completed, the chair forwards the draft advice letters to the supporting panel members for review and any additional comment or recommendations. The final advice letter is provided to the DRP coordinator within 7

days of the meeting. The DRP panel coordinator forwards the design advice letter to the assessing officer or applicant depending on type of application.

If a proposal requires additional design review panel sessions, this may form part of the recommendation of the design advice letter.

7. TENURE OF PANEL MEMBERS

All DRP panel members will serve for a period of 3 years with an initial three to six month period to ensure desired objectives are being met during which time Council will review the Purpose and Role and operation of the Forum. Members may be invited to accept reappointment. Additional or new panel members may be recruited as required.

8. CODES OF CONDUCT

All panel members must operate and conduct themselves in accordance with the Sutherland Shire Councils Code of conduct.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The appointees must not live in the Sutherland Shire, are to have no association with applicants who regularly undertake development in the Sutherland Shire or undertake any work within the Sutherland Shire that may result in a conflict of interest or have the potential for a future conflict of interest with their role on the DRP.

Note: Alternative members will be appointed to the Panel to accommodate circumstances where there may be a conflict of interest or need for replacement due to the absence of a member.

Appendix 1

Design Quality Principles

Principle 1: Context and neighbourhood character

Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context 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.

Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. Well designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood.

Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change.

Principle 2: Built form and scale

Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings.

Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements.

Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.

Principle 3: Density

Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context.

Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population. Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.

Principle 4: Sustainability

Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.

Principle 5: Landscape

Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood.

Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values and preserving green networks.

Good landscape design optimises useability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours' amenity and provides for practical establishment and long term management.

Principle 6: Amenity

Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident well being.

Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.

Principle 7: Safety

Good design optimises safety and security within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety.

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.

Principle 8: Housing diversity and social interaction

Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets.

Well designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix.

Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people and providing opportunities for social interaction among residents.

Principle 9: Aesthetics

Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures.

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.

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