

ITEM 11. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL RESIDENTIAL SUBCOMMITTEE**FILE NO: X011808****SUMMARY**

The City of Sydney is committed to the promotion and delivery of high quality built environments through design excellence. The City was also heavily involved in the development of the 'Apartment Design Guide' (ADG) which was released by the Department of Planning and Environment in 2015, as the City was the first local council to introduce residential amenity standards which the ADG replaced.

The City's Design Advisory Panel (DAP) recently marked its 10 year anniversary. This Panel has been essential to providing high quality independent advice on design excellence and design policy/strategy. Given the extent of development applications and the pressure on Sydney to increase housing, the establishment of a subcommittee of the DAP with the capacity to review applications, including boarding houses, student housing, apartment buildings and other residential projects, is now appropriate. It is also timely to establish the subcommittee, given the transition to Local Planning Panels in March 2018.

Over the last five years, the City of Sydney local government area has experienced a period of unprecedented economic investment, with development activity accelerating, particularly in the residential and visitor sectors. Since 2012, the City of Sydney has assessed approximately 11,000 applications with a construction investment value of more than \$25 billion. Apartment buildings alone accounted for \$15 billion of the total value.

Due to this continuing demand, this report recommends the establishment of a subcommittee of the existing DAP to provide high level independent expert advice and expertise on residential amenity relating to urban design, architecture, landscape architecture and sustainability for multi-unit residential (SEPP 65) and similar applications.

This subcommittee will be linked to the existing well-established DAP, ensuring a feedback loop exists to influence broader planning policy.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council establish a Residential Subcommittee of the Design Advisory Panel to provide high level independent expert advice on urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, heritage and sustainability for multi-unit residential (SEPP 65) applications and other residential applications, as described in the draft City of Sydney Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee Terms of Reference, shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:
 - (i) determine the selection criteria for membership to the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee; and
 - (ii) appoint members to the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee following an Expression of Interest process;

- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise the City of Sydney Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee Terms of Reference, and update the existing Design Advisory Panel Terms of Reference to refer to the subcommittee; and
- (D) Council note that the City of Sydney Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee members will be bound by the City's Code of Conduct, as amended from time to time.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft City of Sydney Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee Terms of Reference December 2017

BACKGROUND

1. Since April 2007, the City has utilised an expert design panel, known as the Design Advisory Panel (DAP). The DAP provides the City with high level independent expert advice on urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, art and sustainability for council projects, large scale development applications and competitions, policy development and planning proposals. The DAP has met regularly since its establishment 10 years ago and members were last re-appointed in 2017.
2. In recent years, the DAP has dealt with a growing workload and the Terms of Reference (TOR) were recently updated to enable the number of meetings held per year to be increased from six to 10. The DAP focuses its reviews on major development applications and applications that have been the subject of a competitive design process. The DAP also guides the City's design review of capital works projects.
3. For more than a decade, the City of Sydney has taken a leadership role in metropolitan Sydney in promoting and elevating design excellence. The City was heavily involved in the development of the 'Apartment Design Guide', which was released by the Department of Planning and Environment in 2015 and is given effect to by State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 (Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development), replacing the previous residential amenity standards set by the Residential Flat Design Code. In advocating design excellence, it is essential that the City pursues design excellence and improving the design quality of all apartment buildings (regardless of size and scale), as well as other forms of residential development such as student housing and boarding house applications.
4. The number of development applications that the City receives for apartment buildings and other forms of student housing and boarding houses has grown significantly in the last five years. Since 2012, 363 applications have been received for SEPP 65 apartment buildings and 131 applications for student housing and boarding houses.
5. Due to this continuing residential demand and the need to ensure high standards of design quality and resolution for all housing applications within the City, this report recommends that the City create additional capacity through the establishment of a Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee. The DAP subcommittee will provide high level, independent advice and expertise on matters relating to urban design, architecture, landscape architecture and sustainability for SEPP 65 and similar applications that are not currently considered by the DAP.
6. In particular, it is recommended that the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee review the following applications:
 - (a) multi-unit residential Development (SEPP 65) Applications, attached housing projects, mixed use developments, student housing, boarding houses and other development proposed under the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP (except where a Design Excellence Competition has been held for the project);
 - (b) pre-lodgement applications for the above; and
 - (c) other development where City staff are of the opinion that the assessment would benefit from referral to the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee.

7. Applications to modify/satisfy an approval where the Design Advisory Panel advice was obtained and is substantially the same will not be referred to the subcommittee for review. Items referred to the subcommittee will not be referred to the full DAP, other than at the request of the subcommittee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE – DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL RESIDENTIAL SUBCOMMITTEE

8. A draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee can be found at Attachment A.
9. The City will seek to appoint members to the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee (through an Expression of Interest process) who are highly skilled in design and design related areas and who have demonstrated experience and knowledge of urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, heritage, sustainable design, SEPP 65 and the Apartment Design Guide. The City is also seeking to appoint members who possess the relevant skills and experience to provide constructive, practical, independent expert advice.
10. The subcommittee will consist of four members at any one time. At least one, and not more than two members will be sitting members of the DAP. The remaining subcommittee members will be drawn from a pool on a rotating basis to enable particular expertise to be called upon when needed, and to manage conflicts of interest and the availability of subcommittee members.
11. Members of the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee would be initially appointed for a three year period and reviewed subsequently every three years thereafter.
12. It is anticipated that the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee would meet monthly, with an option to meet fortnightly where demand for more frequent meetings exists. Meetings will generally be scheduled for a full day, with up to one hour being allocated to each item (depending on the complexity of the project).
13. The applicant's representative and/or architect can elect to present to the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee.
14. Each allocated time slot will generally be structured as follows:
 - (a) assessment planner/urban designer to provide a brief overview of key issues;
 - (b) at the applicant's request, the applicant's representative and/or architect will present to the Panel followed by Panel discussion with the applicant; and
 - (c) applicant leaves the meeting and the Panel deliberates the matter with planning/urban designer.
15. Meeting agendas must be approved by the Director City Planning, Development and Transport. The agenda and supporting documentation will be circulated to the members of the subcommittee seven days prior to a subcommittee meeting. The seven day period will provide subcommittee members with sufficient time to inspect the sites, if necessary, and review the documentation prior to the meeting commencing.

16. The chair of the subcommittee, together with the relevant staff member, will be responsible for drafting and finalising the minutes of the meeting. The minutes are to include the following:
 - (a) a statement of the status and purpose of the meeting;
 - (b) attendance and apologies;
 - (c) declarations of interest;
 - (d) history of the application and a record of previous recommendations made by the subcommittee; and
 - (e) summary of recommendations.
17. The minutes are to be finalised within seven days of the meeting being held and will be made available to City staff, the applicants and Councillors and will be included in development assessment reports and reports provided to the Local Planning Panel and the Central Sydney Planning Committee.
18. The subcommittee will provide an annual summary to the DAP to ensure that major issues are captured and key themes are aligned with the Panel.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment

19. The recommendation to establish a Design Advisory Panel subcommittee is consistent with the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan to improve the City's built environment and the capacity of the City to ensure the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 Design Excellence provisions are carried out.
20. The proposed Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee will contribute to the strengthening of a culture of design excellence, both within the City and within the relevant professions who contribute to the activities of the City.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

21. The costs associated with the establishment and running of a Design Advisory Panel subcommittee include:
 - (a) establishment costs, including recruitment;
 - (b) remuneration for sitting members; and
 - (c) administrative and support costs.
22. Indicatively, it is expected that the budget involved in the running of the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee will be approximately \$120,000 per annum, plus the cost of administration by a staff member.

23. There may be an opportunity to explore the recovery of some of the costs associated with the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee by charging an additional fee payable by the applicant. This can be explored further in the course of preparation of the 2018/19 Fees and Charges.
24. It is anticipated that savings from the operational budget for 2017/18 will fund the costs of the establishment and running costs of the Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee for the remainder of the 2017/18 budget year. An allocation for future funding will be incorporated into the 2018/19 Council budget.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

25. *Local Government Act 1993.*
26. *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.*

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

27. If endorsed, the City of Sydney Design Advisory Panel Residential Subcommittee will be established over the coming months and expressions of interest will be sought from suitably qualified design professions to be appointed to the subcommittee. It is expected that the subcommittee will commence operations in early 2018.

GRAHAM JAHN, AM

Director City Planning, Development and Transport