

# **Attachment E**

## **Competitive Design Alternatives Report**

# **COMPETITIVE DESIGN ALTERNATIVES REPORT**

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NOS. 163 – 173 McEVOY STREET, ALEXANDRIA

August 2019

Revision 5

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Site

The subject site is known as Lot 1 DP 786187 with 18 strata lots in SP 34123, Nos. 163 – 173 McEvoy Street, Alexandria (the site). The site has an 'L' shape (illustrated in the aerial photograph in **Figure 1**), and an area of 5,570.7m<sup>2</sup>, with the following boundary dimensions of approximately:

- 89.4 metres along the south-eastern boundary (McEvoy Street)
- 59 metres along the north-western boundary (Lawrence Street)
- 68.7 metres along the south-western side boundary
- 40 metres along the north-eastern boundary with the property at 84 Lawrence Street
- 28.4 metres along the north-western boundary with the properties between 74 and 84 Lawrence Street
- 41 metres along the north-eastern boundary with the property at 147-161 McEvoy Street



Figure 1: The site (source: Nearthmap)

The topography of the site slopes down from the north-west in a south-easterly direction by approximately 2.8 metres (between RL 13.32 AHD to Lawrence Street and RL 10.52 AHD to McEvoy Street).

The site accommodates a two storey industrial unit development which has vehicle and pedestrian access from McEvoy Street, minimal setbacks to the south-western, north-western and north-eastern boundaries of the site, at-grade car parking throughout the site and a retaining wall adjacent to the north-western boundary of the site to Lawrence Street. A substation is located in the eastern corner of the site.

There are approximately 41 mature and semi-mature trees located within the site, predominantly located along the frontages to McEvoy Street and Lawrence Street.

Flooding advice suggests the 1% AEP flooding condition has only minor effects upon the site, with minor flows (<0.2m depth) confined to the road. Given only this minor street drainage, there is no overland flooding condition affecting the site.

Pursuant to the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (the LEP), the site does not contain an item of heritage significance, nor does it adjoin a heritage item. However, the site is located adjacent the Cooper Estate Heritage Conservation Area.

## **1.2 The Site Context**

The surrounding area contains a mixture of land uses. In this location, McEvoy Street accommodates multi-storey residential, light industrial, commercial, retail and food and drink premises, while Lawrence Street is predominantly residential in character. The scale of the surrounding development ranges from one to seven storeys in height.

McEvoy Street carries in excess of 20,000 average daily vehicle movements under current conditions and is projected to increase to well in excess of 40,000 average daily vehicle movements once the Euston Road off ramp to the Alexandria to Moore Park Connectivity Upgrade commences operation. The Noise Impact Assessment submitted with the Stage 1 DA concluded that due to traffic noise, the recommended internal noise criteria cannot be achieved with windows open for all apartments.

### 1.3 Competitive Design Alternatives Process

Clause 7.20 of the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (the LEP) requires submission of a development control plan for applications on sites in excess of 5,000m<sup>2</sup> outside of Central Sydney. Pursuant to the provisions of Clause 4.23 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, if a development control plan is required before development is carried out, that obligation may be satisfied by the making of a staged development application.

The objective of the Competitive Design Alternatives Brief (see Appendix A) is to select the highest quality architectural, urban design and landscape design solution for the development, with the recommended architectural firm appointed for the submission of a Stage 2 DA, satisfying Clause 6.21 of the LEP.

An invitation was extended to three leading architects, Koichi Takada Architects, Grimshaw Architects and Bates Smart, and one emerging architect, Andrew Burns Architecture. The competition was conducted between 13 May and 24 June 2019, and the process independently observed by Tahlia Alexander and Jessica Symons (City of Sydney Council).

Following the receipt of the final submissions on 24 June 2019 (see Attachments 2 – 6), competing architects were invited to present their submission to the Selection Panel on 28 June 2019 comprising Edward Doueihy (Ceerose, Director), Hannah Tribe (Tribe Studio, Principal), Dr Michael Zanardo (Studio Zanardo, Director) and Russell Olsson (Olsson & Associates Architects, Director). The session was also attended by independent observers, Ben Chamie, Tahlia Alexander and Jessica Symons (City of Sydney Council observers), Daniel McNamara (dmeps, Director, and Competitive Process Manager), Patricia Eltakchi (dmeps, Development Planner) and Thomas Nader (Ceerose, Development Coordinator).

## 2. Competitive Design Alternatives Process

### 2.1 Competitive Process

On 13 May 2019, the Proponent commenced a Competitive Design Alternatives Process to select the most appropriate design and architectural team that best demonstrated the ability to achieve design excellence in accordance with the City of Sydney Competitive Design Policy (Policy).

The selected competitive process comprised an 'invited' competition. The Proponent invited four (4) entrants to participate in the process.

The competitive process was undertaken in accordance with the Design Excellence Strategy for the site and the Brief. The competitive process sought a range of designs that responded to Stage 1 site specific building envelope approved by the consent authority (Land and Environment Court) on 24 August 2018.

A four (4) person Selection Panel reviewed and assessed four (4) architectural designs, all of which represented building form and impact if an additional 10% design excellence building height was granted by the consent authority in consideration of design excellence.

### 2.2 Design Competition Manager & Technical Advisors

The Proponent's independent Competition Manager was Daniel McNamara.

The Proponent made available the following Technical Advisors:

- Daniel McNamara, Town Planner
- Damian Judge, Quantity Surveyor
- Darren Lyons, Flooding

### 2.3 Selection Panel

The four (4) member Selection Panel comprised the following members:

- Edward Doueihy, Ceerose (Director) (Proponent nominee)
- Hannah Tribe, Tribe Studio (Principal) (City of Sydney nominee)

- Dr Michael Zanardo, Studio Zanardo (Director) (City of Sydney nominee) Panel Chair
- Russell Olsson, Olsson & Associates Architects (Director) (Proponent nominee)

## 2.4 City of Sydney Observers

In accordance with the Policy, City Observers were present during presentations and selection panel deliberations. The following City Observers were at the Presentation:

- Tahlia Alexander
- Jessica Symons
- Ben Chamie

## 2.5 Key Dates of Competitive Design Alternatives Process

WEEK/DATE	MILESTONE
<b>Week 1</b> 13 May 2019	Commencement Date
<b>Week 1</b> 17 May 2019	Briefing Session and Site Visit
<b>Week 6</b> 24 June 2019	Final Submissions Lodgement Date
<b>Week 6</b> 25 June 2019	Lodgement of Presentation Date Material
<b>Week 6</b> 26 June 2019	Technical Assessment
<b>Week 6</b> 26 June 2019	Costing by Proponent's Quantity Surveyor
<b>Week 6</b> 28 June 2019	Presentation Date
<b>Within 14 days of Presentation Date</b> 12 July 2019	Decision Date
<b>Within 21 days of Presentation Date</b> 26 July 2019	Notification to Competitors
<b>Within 21 days of Presentation Date</b> 15 August 2019	Competitive Design Alternatives Report

## 2.6 Competition Architects (Numbered in order of presentation)

The Competitive Design Alternatives Process comprised four (4) competitors as outlined below:



1. Koichi Takada Architects
2. Bates Smart
3. Andrew Burns Architecture
4. Grimshaw Architects

## **2.7 Selection Process**

The selection process was based on the written material supplied by competitors and the presentations given to the Selection Panel.

Following a thorough assessment of each scheme, the Selection Panel concluded that one scheme presented the most successful response to the Brief and is recommended as the preferred design of the competitive process.

In accordance with the Policy, the Selection Panel provides this Report which outlines the design merits of each scheme and a recommendation that the architect of the preferred design is retained by the Proponent to prepare a Stage 2 DA.

The Selection Panel considers that the matters set out in Part 4 of this Report (Recommendations), should be addressed prior to the lodgment of the Stage 2 DA.

### 3. Review of Entries

This document has been prepared following review of the entries submitted as part of the competitive design alternatives process.

Four (4) entries have been assessed against the endorsed criteria that accompanied the Competitive Design Alternatives Brief (the brief).



**Figures 2 – 5:** Koichi Takada Architects – Scheme 1 (top left); Bates Smart – Scheme 2 (top right); Andrew Burns Architecture – Scheme 3 (bottom left); Grimshaw Architects – Scheme 4 (bottom right).

### 3.1 Scheme 1 – Koichi Takada Architects

#### Overview

MATTER	PROPOSED
Yield	Total No. Dwellings: 140 Commercial: 667m <sup>2</sup>
Dwelling Mix	Studio: 20 (14%) 1 bed: 29 (21%) 2 bed: 70 (50%) 3 bed: 21 (15%)

The Koichi Takada Architects scheme proposed a rethinking of the approved Stage 1 envelopes with the massing of the courtyard wings redistributed to the top of the McEvoy Street building to create two regular building forms. Additional upper-level stepping of the McEvoy street wall and strong façade modulation contributed to a distinctive character and identity. A through-site link provided a semi-public connection between street frontages and created the setting for the installation of public art.

The Panel appreciated the ambition and creativity of the proposal in challenging the typical aesthetics of residential flat building design with a highly expressive and sculptural elevational treatment. The narrative developed around brickwork texture and detail and its relationship to the historical context was also well-received. The Panel highly commended the public art concept and its meaningful integration with the proposal. The 'forest' and 'waterfall' landscape concepts were also positive elements, however deep soil provision was noted as slightly under requirement.

The Panel was not convinced however that the major non-compliances with the Stage 1 envelopes in terms of building footprints were adequately justified or resulted in a superior outcome. The Panel noted that the increased building depth compromised amenity resulting in units that were greater than 18m glass-to-glass, habitable rooms that were greater than 8m in depth, and the inclusion of many internalised studies. Common circulation corridors in the McEvoy Street building were also internalised without daylight and natural ventilation. The relatively large apartment sizes, with 2 bedroom apartments of 112 m<sup>2</sup>, and high number of lift cores (10), suggested economic inefficiencies. The Panel felt that the proposal was not cohesive with the desired future character at an urban scale. The length of the McEvoy Street frontage was not successfully broken down into an intermediate scale of smaller components and the treatment of the commercial component in a similar way to the residential above made the ground floor interface overly enclosed.

The Panel thanks Koichi Takada Architects for its submission and recognises the efforts made in their

scheme. However, having regard to the above, and strengths of the other invited schemes, it was decided not to proceed further with this proposal.

## Scheme 2 – Bates Smart

### Overview

MATTER	PROPOSED
Yield	Total No. Dwellings: 134 Commercial: 1,153m <sup>2</sup>
Dwelling Mix	Studio: 0 (0%) 1 bed: 43 (32%) 2 bed: 61 (46%) 3 bed: 30 (22%)

The Bates Smart scheme proposed adjustments to the approved Stage 1 envelopes with a reduction in building depth and the introduction of a third rear wing to the McEvoy Street building to redistribute massing. A series of two-storey terraces stacked two high lined the Lawrence Street frontage. A semi-public through-site link provided site permeability and access to the communal landscaped courtyard.

The Panel commended the clear and sound site strategy and could see merit in the minor departures from the Stage 1 envelopes. The narrower building depth combined with multiple lift cores provided for a generally high level of amenity allowing for increased cross-through and corner apartments, although the typical south-facing unit was greater than 8m in depth and included an internalised study. The Panel recognised the thoughtful massing of the McEvoy Street building with the facade stepping in plan to acknowledge neighbouring alignments, manipulation of the building form to create three volumes separated by entries, and upper level setbacks making for a varied roofline against the sky. The Panel particularly appreciated the typology of the walk-up terraces on Lawrence Street and their playful approach and sensitivity to scale and detail within the Lawrence Street streetscape. The Panel noted the successful sectional solution of the two-storey commercial component and the creation of open and welcoming tenancies to McEvoy Street. The landscape concept was positive and well-integrated with the architecture. The Panel was impressed by the technical resolution of the proposal and integration of acoustic measures as a part of the window suites showed promise (subject to further development and testing).

The Panel felt however that the McEvoy Street building had a relatively 'generic' appearance and lacked a sense of site-specificity. The Panel was not convinced by the dual expression of the building as both masonry and lightweight and found the intersection of the two treatments ambiguous in resolution. The Panel noted that there were a couple of potential amenity issues in the courtyard

wings including the relationship of ground floor private open space to the communal courtyard and solar protection of west-facing elevations in summer. The extensive use of solid vertical louvres for the top floors as a means of expression and to solve visual privacy across the reentrant corners was seen as a mediocre treatment. Whilst the extensive green planters and climbing frames were appreciated, the Panel needed further explanation of long-term maintenance, in particular outside bedrooms. The Panel considered that the bedrooms of the lower terraces located half a level below the Lawrence Street footpath were not ideal and the inability for the upper terraces to directly access the communal courtyard an oversight.

The Panel thanks Bates Smart for its submission and recognises the efforts made in their scheme. However, having regard to the above, and strengths of the other invited schemes, it was decided not to proceed further with this proposal.

### 3.2 Scheme 3 – Andrew Burns Architecture

#### Overview

MATTER	PROPOSED
Yield	Total No. Dwellings: 153 Commercial: Not stated
Dwelling Mix	Studio: 16 (11%) 1 bed: 31 (20%) 2 bed: 86 (56%) 3 bed: 20 (13%)

The Andrew Burns Architecture scheme adopts the approved Stage 1 envelopes and adjusts the geometry to align the McEvoy Street building with the Lawrence Street building across the courtyard and also reduce the building depth. The McEvoy street wall is expressed as four clear masonry volumes topped by a sawtooth roofscape.

The Panel commended the careful and thoughtful approach to the scheme and could see merit in the minor departures from the Stage 1 envelopes. The Panel was impressed by the genuine engagement with place and the site-specificity of the proposal which was seen to speak meaningfully to the character of the area. The deliberate massing to create four volumes of differing colour and texture along McEvoy Street successfully broke down the length of the street wall whilst the industrial roofscape provided a distinctive silhouette against the sky. The Panel commended original features of the proposal including the open-to-the-sky lobbies with entry bridges, consideration for interiors, and the attention to brick detailing which had the potential to be pushed further. The identified locations for public art and the curation of potential artwork themes was considered appropriate. The Panel appreciated the landscape concept which used the smaller spaces between the courtyard wings positively to create casual yet intimate places within an 'urban forest'. The Panel was also drawn to the Lawrence Street elevation which was fine grain, sensitive in material and detail, and provided a good interface with the heritage conservation area opposite. Overall, the proposal was the most compelling of the four schemes.

The Panel held concerns that the floor space ratio of the proposal may be over if the floor space of the McEvoy Street lobbies were to be included, however if the design of these could be adjusted to ensure they were truly externalised (perhaps with opposing openings) in keeping with the design concept and consistent with the planning definition of 'gross floor area', the Panel was supportive of

the overall form. Technical attention should be paid to any window openings into the lobbies (which may not be required and could be removed), fire egress distances, and smoke escape considerations (which may require walkways to be vertically aligned). The Panel was also not convinced by the winter garden solution for acoustic control to McEvoy Street and would encourage a different approach, that avoids the inclusion of balconies as gross floor area and potentially employs acoustic plenums (see City of Sydney performance pathway guideline for Alternative Natural Ventilation of Apartments in Noisy Environments). Practical concerns were raised with the extent of box gutters associated with the sawtooth roof form, and the Panel would support solutions such as low profile falls within the sawtooth valleys as long as the appearance at street level were to be maintained. The Panel considered that the McEvoy Street commercial spaces needed to be increased in height to address the future volume of traffic on McEvoy Street, potentially incorporating a mezzanine level, and that the ground floor interface could be improved by opening up the commercial tenancies more to the street, perhaps with double-width openings. The Panel considered that the some of the two-bedroom units were too large, and the number of studio units proposed was too high, but that this could be improved through readjustment of layouts that may change the number of units but would keep within the envelope. Rationalisation of apartment planning would also be beneficial with less interlocking plan off-sets and more vertical alignment for services. The Panel felt that alternative options should be investigated to solve visual privacy across reentrant corners as the louvre screens proposed were suboptimal. Use of the roof form to exploit additional solar access and natural cross ventilation through clerestory windows should be explored. The Panel agreed that the basement layout was inefficient and needed to be redesigned in a more rational manner whilst increasing deep soil to meet minimum width compliance.

The Panel thanks Andrew Burns Architecture for its submission and recognises the efforts made in their scheme.



### 3.3 Scheme 4 – Grimshaw Architects

#### Overview

MATTER	PROPOSED
Yield	Total No. Dwellings: 170 Commercial: 617m <sup>2</sup>
Dwelling Mix	Studio: 5 (3%) 1 bed: 58 (34%) 2 bed: 89 (52%) 3 bed: 18 (11%)

The Grimshaw Architects scheme varied significantly to the approved Stage 1 envelopes by consolidating the massing into two 'linear bar' buildings aligned to their respective streets to either side of a consolidated sunny landscaped courtyard. Both buildings were arranged around 'interstitial street' atrium spaces providing circulation to the units.

The Panel acknowledged the refined architectural character of the proposal and the clear rhythm and rigour of its expressed modular structure. The robustness of material selection, standardisation of components and the attractiveness of construction efficiencies was also recognised. The Panel appreciated the concept of an 'aperture' that allowed for a range of housing options and interchangeability of apartment types to be accommodated within the 'framework', however the appearance of the building was also polarising with the austerity and relentlessness of the façade composition considered unappealing by some for housing. The Panel considered that the double-height commercial spaces to McEvoy Street would provide good activation of the street edge and that the courtyard provided a communal focus and positive outlook for apartments with a large unified landscaped space with generous deep soil enabled by well-organised basement levels. Use of two-storey maisonette apartments to the top-most levels of the buildings cleverly maximised solar access.

The Panel was not convinced however that the major non-compliances with the Stage 1 envelopes in terms of building footprint and height/number of storeys for both buildings were adequately justified or resulted in a superior outcome. The Panel felt that the McEvoy Street building massing was not successfully broken down into smaller components of differing character and would appear out-of-scale and 'monolithic' in its context. The revised approach to massing also produced non-compliances in building separation between buildings on site and to boundaries with neighbours.

The Panel noted that the atrium spaces effectively performed as double-loaded corridors resulting in too many single-orientation units without proper natural cross ventilation as well as an excess of units with no sun facing solely onto McEvoy Street. High-sill windows to corridors, whilst offering natural ventilation, would also pose acoustic privacy issues. The Panel also held reservations about the length of corridor spaces, their perceived undifferentiated 'institutional' quality and the potential for non-compliance with the definition of gross floor area. The Panel considered that the inclusion of a full residential storey below the Lawrence Street footpath level in the cut of the land was undesirable and that the private central courtyards off bedrooms were unsuccessful. The ground floor living rooms on Lawrence Street lacked privacy.

The Panel thanks Grimshaw Architects for its submission and recognises the efforts made in their scheme. However, having regard to the above, and strengths of the other invited schemes, it was decided not to proceed further with this proposal.

### **3.4 Summation**

The Selection Panel concluded that the outstanding proposal for the site was presented by competitor 3 (Andrew Burns Architecture).

In accordance with the Competition Brief and the intent of the Design Excellence provisions of the LEP and Policy, the Selection Panel recommends that scheme 3 demonstrates the potential for Design Excellence and that the team be retained by the proponent. The Selection Panel recommends that the consent authority consider the issues and recommendations contained in Part 4 of this Report.

## 4. Recommendations

The Selection Panel sets out its recommendations which may assist the consent authority in ensuring that the preferred design is refined and developed to achieve the best possible design outcome. The following aspects of Scheme 3 should be addressed prior to the lodgment of a Stage 2 DA.

The Panel believes the fundamental aspects of the design which should be retained throughout further design development are:

- The four strong masonry volumes to McEvoy Street differentiated through texture and colour that provides variety in the streetscape and across the large site
- The fine grain and materiality of the street wall to Lawrence Street
- The appearance of a sawtooth roofscape to both the McEvoy and Lawrence Street buildings
- The landscape approach
- The public art approach

The Panel considers the aspects of the design which require further attention throughout further design development are:

- Ensuring that the McEvoy Street lobbies are designed such that they are truly externalised and can be excluded from gross floor area
- Technical attention regarding window openings to lobbies, fire egress distances and smoke escape considerations
- Reconsideration of the method of achieving acoustic protection and natural ventilation to the McEvoy Street frontage
- The elimination of box gutters whilst maintaining the appearance of the sawtooth roof form
- Incorporation of additional height to the McEvoy Street commercial spaces to address the future volume of traffic on McEvoy Street
- Improvement of the ground floor interface along McEvoy Street
- Adjustment of layouts to address the mix, number and size of units within the envelope
- Rationalisation of apartment planning to increase buildability and reduce complexity
- Adjustment of the design at reentrant corners to better solve visual privacy
- Use of the roof form to exploit additional solar access and natural cross ventilation
- Reconfiguration of the basement levels to improve efficiency and increase deep soil

- Ensuring that any revised layouts achieve good amenity and meet the requirements of the Apartment Design Guide including (but not limited to) building separation for privacy, solar access, natural cross ventilation and unit sizes.

## 5. Conclusion

This competitive process has been carried in accordance with the Brief and City's Policy. This Report documents the competitive process and the winner of the process as determined by the Selection Panel.

It is considered that the preferred scheme by Andrew Burns Architecture, subject to further refinement as set out in Part 4, best fulfils the design, commercial and planning objectives of the Brief and has the potential to achieve design excellence.

The Selection Panel confirms that this Report is an accurate record of the competitive process and endorses the assessment and recommendations.

NAME	POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE
Edward Doueih	Director		15/8/2019.
Hannah Tribe	Principal		15 August 2019
Dr Michael Zanardo	Director		15 August 2019
Russell Olsson	Director		15 August 2019