

Urban Design Review Panel

Annual Report

2023



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City of
Newcastle

Acknowledgment of Country

City of Newcastle (CN) acknowledges its Local Government Area (LGA) sits within the Country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples. We acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient relationships. We acknowledge the custodianship of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples and the care and stewardship they have performed in this place since time immemorial. We recognise the history of truth that acknowledges the impact of invasion and colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and how this still resonates today.

Contents

Foreword from the Chair _____	5
Understanding design review panels _____	6
Membership _____	8
Applications considered by the panel _____	10
Design competitions _____	20
Attachment – determined applications considered by the UDRP in 2023 _____	22

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Foreword from the Chair

It is my pleasure to present the *Urban Design Review Panel Annual Report 2023*. The year has been another very busy one for the Urban Design Review Panel ('UDRP'), with a substantial number of significant developments and a range of development proposals being considered.

It has been pleasing to note the willingness – indeed enthusiasm – of many proponents to voluntarily present concepts for development for feedback at an early stage in the design process, well before documentation has proceeded to Development Application ('DA') level. A number of proponents have expressed their appreciation for positive design review at an early stage in the evolution of their concepts, and have observed that dialogue with the UDRP at an early stage has multiple positive benefits, in terms of design excellence, expediency, and avoidance of the need to re-document multiple designs to a DA level.

While interest rates and a shortage of medium to large building contractors have applied pressure to developments, the City has continued to see a high level of interest from the industry, with the number of larger developments continuing to provide new residences, commercial spaces and other facilities. Design competitions have also produced some excellent proposals that set a high standard.

The UDRP has also considered a range of smaller projects with relatively modest budgets, which also contribute to the character of the City, and which provide a variety of accommodation from co-living, to smaller medium density developments, to individual dwellings and early learning centres. Good design benefits the whole community and need not cost more – in fact good design can in some circumstances save on costs.

I would like to thank the project proponents for their willingness and frequent enthusiasm in presenting to the UDRP, and engaging in a meaningful dialogue in respect to design excellence.

I would also like to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of the CN staff who facilitate the UDRP's activity. Their work is always outstanding. And lastly, I would like to thank my fellow UDRP Members, who disrupt their day to day professional practice commitments, not only to attend full day meetings, but to produce extensive written reports, which are provided to proponents.

It is a delight to work collaboratively with such a dedicated, diverse and committed group.

Dr Philip Pollard

Chair

Urban Design Review Panel

Understanding design review panels

A design review panel is a panel of expert and independent design professionals that provide constructive feedback on the design quality of development proposals and strategic design projects.

The City of Newcastle has a rich tradition of establishing and maintaining a design review panel. Reputedly the oldest continuously serving urban design and architectural advisory body in the state of New South Wales, the City's UDRP traces its origins back to the 1980's when it was initially formed as the Urban Design Consultative Group.

The UDRP operates in accordance with *Urban Design Panel Charter 2020* ('UDRP Charter') and is recognised by the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces as a design review panel established under *State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 - Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development* ('SEPP 65'). On 14 December 2023, the NSW Government consolidated the provisions of SEPP 65 into the *Statement Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*. However, for the 2023 calendar year the UDRP operated under the provisions of SEPP 65 noting that there was no meeting held in December 2023.

For local government areas such as Newcastle where there is an established design review panel, development proposals are required to be reviewed by the panel when an environmental planning instrument such as a state environmental planning policy or local environmental plan stipulates design review. Other project types receive advice from the relevant design review panel at the request of the consent authority, as established under the UDRP Charter.

Acting in an advisory capacity, the UDRP plays a vital part in improving the design quality of new development within Newcastle by providing independent, impartial, and expert design advice.



Membership

UDRP membership and meeting attendance during the period is shown below. The panel met 13 times during 2023.



Dr Philip Pollard

Chair

Meetings attended: **11**



Colin Brady

Member

Meetings attended: **11**



Kristy Cianci

Member

Meetings attended: **6**



Kerry Hunter

Member

Meetings attended: **8**



Justin Hamilton

Alternate Member

Meetings attended: **1**



David Moir

Alternate Member

Meetings attended: **2**

The UDRP membership comprises a specialist group of design professionals with extensive experience and appreciation of the design issues of the Newcastle Local Government Area.

The selection of the current UDRP membership occurred through an Expression of Interest process with the panel appointed for a three-year team commencing in July 2021. A UDRP meeting is convened by three or more members chosen from the pool of six, having regard to providing a balanced representation of expertise, consistency in panel composition where a proposal requires more than one design review session, and member availability.

The UDRP Charter establishes the key objectives of the UDRP, which are to:

- Examine, evaluate and critique the urban design aspects of major commercial, industrial, residential, community and civic developments.
- Assess the design quality of development proposals and identify how development proposals could be improved by design changes.
- Critique plans for proposed developments and provide comments to applicants and their consultants on recommended modifications to improve the design quality of development proposals.
- Identify and recommend improvements to development proposals necessary to achieve consistency with the design quality principles and the Apartment Design Guide.
- Advise CN Officers on the design quality of development proposals, to assist with assessment of whether such applications warrant support because they contribute to an improvement in the built fabric of the local area.

We extend our sincere gratitude to each member of the UDRP for their invaluable contributions throughout 2023. We appreciate the members for generously sharing their extensive industry experience and expertise with applicants and design teams. The UDRP continues to enhance the City's understanding of good design, and this has set positive benchmarks for future development.

Michelle Bisson

Executive Director Planning & Environment
City of Newcastle

Applications considered by the panel

During 2023, the UDRP undertook 63 individual design review sessions: providing advice to CN staff and applicants about the design quality and amenity of 48 different development proposals as well as providing input on strategic projects including the Draft Development Control Plan 2023. Key examples of significant proposals considered during 2023 are illustrated in this report.



MA2022/00286

1 National Park Street, Newcastle West

Sec 4.56 modification to DA2019/00711 - mixed use - addition of additional floor, inclusion of stratum subdivision, changes to floor plans and elevations

\$71.7 million

Approved by the Hunter Central Coast Regional Planning Panel in May 2023

DA2022/01424 810 Hunter Street, Newcastle West

Demolition of existing commercial building and construction of an eleven storey commercial development

\$12.42 million

Approved by the Development Applications Committee in October 2023



DA2022/01316 & DA2022/01317 711 Hunter Street, Newcastle West

Stage 1 involving demolition of existing structures and the erection of a mixed use development proposing 136 apartments, retail premises and associated parking, landscaping, services and associated two lot subdivision

Stage 2 involving demolition of existing structures and the erection of a mixed use development proposing 121 apartments, retail premises and associated parking, landscaping, services and associated two lot subdivision

\$116.15 million (total)

Approved by the Hunter Central Coast Regional Planning Panel in October 2023





DA2022/00846

805 Hunter Street, Newcastle West

Mixed-use development - including demolition of existing buildings, retail and commercial premises, shop top housing, and car parking

\$29.99 million

Approved by the Development Applications Committee in September 2023

DA2023/00119

28 Denison Street, Newcastle West

Concept proposal - demolition of existing building and erection of a 12-storey co-living development comprising 51 rooms in addition to a dedicated community artist space

\$18.21 million

Approved by the Development Applications Committee in December 2023



DA2022/00581

654 Glebe Road, Adamstown

Mixed use / shop top housing development - including 8 x 2 bed units, 1 x commercial, and parking

\$1.78 Million

Approved by Council in September 2023



Design Competitions

Design competitions are an independent jury process run under the governance of both City of Newcastle and the Government Architect NSW. It involves the submission of design responses by a minimum of three design teams for a proposed development, with the winning scheme being selected by a jury based on design-related criteria. City of Newcastle's Jury Representative is UDRP Chairperson Dr. Philip Pollard.

In Newcastle, the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) requires certain developments to demonstrate 'design excellence'. Within the planning system, the term design excellence refers to both a process and an outcome. The design excellence clauses in Newcastle's LEP are applied to development within the Newcastle City Centre.

Certain development subject to the design excellence requirements are required to undertake a competitive design process, commonly known as a 'design competition'. The design competition requirement is triggered by factors such as the location of the project, capital investment value, building height or lot size.

Design competitions are a well-established process used nationally and internationally to improve the design quality of our built environment. They are a well-tested and successful model for delivering a high quality of design thinking and innovation.

2023 has seen UDRP Chairperson Dr Philip Pollard continue the role of City of Newcastle's Jury Representative as part of the post competition design integrity process for the design competitions held in 2022.

Design integrity is a process that ensures the design intent and design quality of the winning scheme is maintained or improved through subsequent design and development stages and through to construction. This includes continuing design review by a Design Integrity Panel (DIP) at regular intervals through documentation and construction stages of the projects. The DIP is formed from the relevant competition jury.



Render of East End Stage 3 & 4

Attachment

Determined applications considered by the UDRP in 2023

Application ID	Property	Description Details
DA2022/00846	805 Hunter Street Newcastle West	Mixed-use development - including demolition of existing buildings, retail and commercial premises, shop top housing, and car parking
DA2022/00796	132 Brunner Road Adamstown	Demolition of existing buildings and structures, erection of a five-storey mixed use development, comprising ground level car parking, ground floor business premises and four levels of shop top housing, tree removal and site works
DA2022/01424	810 Hunter Street Newcastle West	Demolition of existing commercial building and construction of an eleven storey commercial development
DA2022/01316	711 Hunter Street Newcastle West	Stage 1 involving demolition of existing structures and the erection of a mixed use development proposing 136 apartments, retail premises and associated parking, landscaping, services and associated two lot subdivision
DA2022/01317	711 Hunter Street Newcastle West	Stage 2 involving demolition of existing structures and the erection of a mixed use development proposing 121 apartments, retail premises and associated parking, landscaping, services and associated two lot subdivision
DA2022/01494	9 Queen Street Cooks Hill	Shop top housing - ground floor commercial and dwelling above
DA2022/01482	1B Islington Street Islington	Demolition of existing structures and the erection of a residential flat building comprising six permanent group homes
MA2022/00286	1 National Park Street Newcastle West	Sec 4.56 modification to DA2019/00711 - mixed use - addition of additional floor, inclusion of stratum subdivision, changes to floor plans and elevations
DA2022/01233	29 Moate Street Georgetown	Demolition of existing structures, erection of a three (3)-storey mixed-use development comprising three (3) commercial tenancies at ground level, 16 residential apartments (shop top housing), strata subdivision and tree removal
DA2023/00119	28 Denison Street Newcastle West	Concept proposal - demolition of existing building and erection of a 12-storey co-living development comprising 51 rooms in addition to a dedicated community artist space
DA2023/00008	41 Heaton Street Jesmond	Co-living housing - includes demolition
DA2023/00082	134 King Street Newcastle	Partial demolition and refurbishment of an existing commercial building, including two additional levels
DA2022/01075	4 Raglan Street Wallsend	Childcare centre - change of use and works
DA2022/00581	654 Glebe Road Adamstown	Mixed use / shop top housing development - including 8 x 2 bed units, 1 x commercial, and parking

Application ID	Property	Description Details
DA2023/00303	17A Bishopsgate Street Wickham	Attached dwellings - erection of four (4) attached dwellings and two (2) into four (4) lot subdivision
DA2023/00444	1 Charles Street Wickham	Shop top housing - including single dwelling and associated ancillary development (pool) and commercial premises
DA2023/00603	789 Hunter Street Newcastle West	Partial demolition of existing structures and construction of a mixed use development comprising retail premises and co-living housing
MA2023/00316	11-17 Mosbri Crescent The Hill	Sec 4.55(2) Modification to DA2019/00061 - reduction in number of dwellings, reconfiguration/amalgamation of units, reconfiguration of car parking and waste room, change to parking numbers and allocation, level changes and amendment to conditions
DA2023/00886	1 Brunner Road Broadmeadow	Proposed demolition of existing buildings and erection of a mixed use development involving a pub, tourist and visitor accommodation-16 hotel rooms, retail premises and forty eight (48) residential dwellings and associated works

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