

City of Belmont Design Review Panel Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

The purpose of the City of Belmont Design Review Panel is to have independent experts assess and provide constructive and objective advice to deliver quality development outcomes and increased certainty for applicants through early identification of design issues.

OBJECTIVES

1. To elevate the importance of design quality in planning assessment.
2. To provide advice to the City on the design quality of proposals with reference to State Planning Policy 7.0 Design Principles as well as the Local Planning Framework.
3. To provide independent, fair and reasonable design advice.
4. To facilitate a performance based approach to design review.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Panel will be guided by the principles outlined in State Planning Policy 7.0 Design of the Built Environment (SPP 7.0):

Context and character - *Good design responds to and enhances the distinctive characteristics of a local area, contributing to a sense of place.*

Landscape quality - *Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, within a broader ecological context.*

Built form and scale - *Good design ensures that the massing and height of development is appropriate to its setting and successfully negotiates between existing built form and the intended future character of the local area.*

Functionality and build quality - *Good design meets the needs of users efficiently and effectively, balancing functional requirements to perform well and deliver optimum benefit over the full life cycle.*

Sustainability - *Good design optimises the sustainability of the built environment, delivering positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.*

Amenity – *Good design provides successful places that offer a variety of uses and activities while optimising internal and external amenity for occupants, visitors and neighbours, providing environments that are comfortable, productive and healthy.*

Legibility - *Good design results in buildings and places that are legible, with clear connections and easily identifiable elements to help people find their way around.*

Safety - *Good design optimises safety and security, minimising the risk of personal harm and supporting safe behaviour and use.*

Community - *Good design responds to local community needs as well as the wider social context, providing environments that support a diverse range of people and facilitate social interaction.*

Aesthetics - *Good design is the product of a skilled, judicious design process that results in attractive and inviting buildings and places that engage the senses.*

APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

The following applications shall be referred to the Design Review Panel:

- Proposals which include a building that is three storeys or greater in height (above natural ground level);
- Proposals for 6 or more multiple dwellings (apartments) at or above the R40 density;
- Proposals to be determined by the Joint Development Assessment Panel;
- Development fronting Great Eastern Highway;
- Development located within Development Area 6;
- Development located within the Golden Gateway precinct;
- Any other proposal referred to the panel by the Director Development and Communities or Manager Planning Services. Proposals may include preliminary assessment applications, scheme amendments, design guidelines, local planning policies, local development plans, structure plans and/or activity centre plans.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Composition of the Panel

The Panel will comprise a multi-disciplinary group of independent professionals who are appointed by the City to evaluate the design quality of proposals that meet the thresholds and criteria outlined within the Terms of Reference.

The City shall appoint a pool with seven members in order to ensure that appropriate expertise can be obtained, depending on the nature of the proposal. The pool will comprise four primary Panel members and three support Panel members, whose specialist skills can be drawn upon when required.

Members shall have appropriate qualifications and substantial experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Architecture (**essential**) – *Chairperson must have an architectural background*
- Landscape architecture (**essential**)
- Urban design (**essential**)
- Civil and/or structural engineering
- Services engineering
- Heritage
- Sustainability and environmental design
- Accessibility
- Transport planning

Membership of the Design Review Panel will be sought via a public Expression of Interest process, with the appointment of members to be undertaken by the City.

A person who is currently employed by, or who is an Elected Member of the City, is not eligible for appointment as a member of the Design Review Panel. All Design Review Panel members shall be eligible for registration and maintain good standing with their respective professional bodies.

2. Term of Appointment

Membership of the Panel will be for a fixed 2 year term.

3. Panel Quorum

A Panel meeting shall comprise a maximum of four members with a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and two other panel members. A Design Review Panel meeting may not proceed unless a quorum comprising a minimum of three members is present.

If a quorum cannot be achieved for all or part of the meeting, the City will contact suitable members from the pool. If a quorum cannot be achieved, the meeting cannot proceed and shall be re-scheduled.

4. Remuneration

The members of the Panel shall be paid sitting fees for each meeting attended.

Panel members are to be paid at a set standard rate per hour for the duration of the design review meeting, plus one hour of preparation. The Chairperson will receive a higher hourly fee due to the additional responsibility of the role, plus time for preparation and time spent advising and editing reporting as needed.

The fees paid to each member shall be market tested every 2 years to ensure that the City can attract the required expertise to sit on the panel.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PANEL

1. Observers

Panel meetings shall generally be closed to members of the public as information discussed can be commercially confidential.

2. Site Inspection

Panel members shall be familiar with each site on the agenda prior to the meeting. A site visit may be arranged if considered necessary by the City or Panel Chairperson.

3. Panel Member Preparation

It is expected that Panel members will familiarise themselves with all information provided prior to the meeting and prepare comments in advance, to enable effective use of session time. If additional information is required prior to the meeting, a request shall be submitted to the City as soon as possible.

4. Frequency of meetings

Meetings will generally be held no more than once per fortnight, but can be scheduled at any time in response to urgent matters. Advice of a scheduled meeting, the agenda and information associated with each proposal shall be provided to Panel members one week prior to the intended meeting date.

The length of a Design Review Panel meeting shall be a maximum of 3 hours in duration.

5. Meeting Format

The meeting agenda including attachments (plans, supporting information, and an assessment against the City's planning framework) shall be provided to the Panel members by the nominated officer at least one week before the meeting date. In addition to Panel members, Local Government staff will attend (usually an Administration Officer, the assessing officer and a Senior Planner, Coordinator or Manager).

The Chairperson will conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda, following the below meeting format. The recommended meeting duration for each item is 45 minutes, including a briefing. A longer duration may be allowed for complex projects.

6. Conflict and Disclosure of Interest

Panel members will ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict or incompatibility between the impartial fulfilment of Panel duties and personal interests or those interests of immediate family members, business partners or close associates.

Panel members will disclose any interest required to be disclosed under:

- the *Local Government Act 1995*;
- the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*; or
- the City of Belmont Code of Conduct.

TIMING AND NUMBER OF REVIEWS

The number of reviews needed will vary depending on the complexity of a proposal.

Design reviews should occur before a development application is submitted. It is strongly recommended that the first design review takes place during the concept design stage to ensure that proponents can take advantage of the advice offered at a time where the design is flexible enough to accommodate change without impacting on time and cost constraints.

Subsequent reviews may then occur when the design has been further progressed. Depending on the outcome of the initial meeting, this review session may occur prior to the proposal being submitted for development approval or via a follow up session to occur post lodgement.

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

These Terms of Reference were adopted by Full Council at its Ordinary Council Meeting held 24 September 2019. The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed and amended as necessary.