NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL
DESIGN & SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY PANEL

CHARTER

2026

northern beaches council

Purpose

Northern Beaches Council has established a Design & Sustainability Advisory Panel to provide independent expert advice on urban design, architecture, landscape architecture and sustainability and to undertake the statutory role of a Design Review Panel, for large multi-unit/shop top housing applications and other significant developments.

The advice provided by the Panel aims to assist applicants prepare applications and Council in its promotion and delivery of high-quality built environments and design excellence.

Advice to Northern Beaches Council

Scope

The Design & Sustainability Advisory Panel (the Panel) provides independent advice and expertise on matters relating to urban design, architecture, landscape architecture and sustainability including:

- Pre Lodgement and Development applications for developments under Chapter 4 of SEPP Housing (3 plus storeys/4 plus units), including:

    a. Residential Flat Buildings
    b. Shop Top Housing
    c. Seniors Housing
    d. Affordable Housing

- Any other development application where the Director Planning and Place or the Executive Manager Development Assessments is of the opinion the assessment would benefit from referral to the Panel.

- Significant capital works projects being delivered by Council.

Note – section 4.55 applications to modify an approval where the Design & Sustainability Advisory Panel provided advice may not be referred to the Panel for review (except where significant design changes are proposed).

Reference to material

The Panel will make recommendations and provide advice to Council on matters referred to it having regard to the material forwarded to it in each case.

Function of the Panel

The Panel is an advisory panel and is not a committee of Council. It has no power or authority, whether by delegation, agency or otherwise to exercise any function, right, duty or power of the Council, whether under a statute or other law, as a landowner, or in any other capacity except to fulfil the role as a Design Review Panel as defined. Opinions of the Panel are advisory only and do not have determinative weight in relation to the assessment of an application.

Members

Council will appoint a pool of members who are highly recognised in the design profession and who have demonstrated experience and knowledge of urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, sustainability and the Apartment Design Guide.

The Panel will consist of 3 members at any one time selected from the pool on a rotating basis.

Rotating selection from the pool of members will allow the Panel to be constituted to include particular expertise for particular matters as required.

Members will be engaged for an initial term of three years and reviewed subsequently every three years.

If a member resigns from the Panel, Council may appoint a replacement member who has similar skills and experience. The appointment may be made by the Chief Executive Officer, based on recommendations made by the Director Planning and Place.

Members of the Panel will be paid a fee for attending the panel meetings and provision of other advice (this fee includes site inspections, pre-reading, and travel arrangements).

Members are expected to invoice Council for meetings in a timely manner.

Chairperson

A Panel Chair will be appointed by the Director Planning and Place. The member appointed as the Chair will chair the meeting, and review/signoff meeting minutes.

Conduct and Disclosures

Members must act lawfully and with honesty, integrity and professionalism and comply with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Members who have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any matter which the Panel is asked to review, must disclose the nature of the interest as soon as practicable after the agenda is circulated.

A disclosure about a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Meeting Procedures

The Panel will meet at such place and time as notified to the members from Council. It is expected the Panel will meet monthly during ordinary business hours. However, depending on circumstances and needs, the number and frequency of meetings may change.

Panel meetings will ordinarily be scheduled for a full day (8.40am to 4.30pm). Shorter meetings will occur in the event that there is not a full agenda.

50 minutes will be allocated to each item on the agenda. Each item's time slot will generally be structured as follows:

- Assessment planner/urban designer to provide a brief overview of the key issues with the DA (5 minutes).
- The applicant's representative and/or architect will present to the panel (25 minutes).
- Applicant leaves the meeting and the panel deliberates the matter with planning staff/urban design staff (20 minutes).

The meeting agendas are to be approved by the Executive Manager Development Assessment. The agenda and supporting documentation will be circulated to the members of the Panel 7 days prior to the meeting. The 7 day period provides panel members sufficient time to inspect the sites and review the documentation prior to the meeting commencing.

The Panel will be responsible for drafting the minutes for each item, which will be provided to the Executive Manager for signoff prior to distribution.

The comments and recommendations of the Panel should be provided in the context of, and with specific reference to, relevant planning considerations including the requirements of the Apartment Design Guide and Council's Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan.

The minutes are to include the following:

a) A statement of the status and purpose of the meeting.
b) Attendance, apologies, and declaration of interest.
c) Summary of recommendations.

The minutes are to be finalised within 7 days of the meeting being held.

Consideration by the Panel and Providing Advice

The minutes of each Panel meeting will be made available to Council staff, and the applicant, with any pre-lodgment advice being treated as being 'commercially in confidence' subject to Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. When the Development Application is lodged, the minutes will be placed on the Council's Application Search website.

The minutes will also be included in development assessment reports and any reports provided to the Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel or any other relevant determining authority.

Review

The charter and operations of the Design & Sustainability Advisory Panel may be reviewed by Council from time to time and will be reviewed within 3 years of the date of the policy.