

Parramatta CBD Height Study



11-13 Aird Street, Parramatta

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Submitted to Parramatta City Council

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1.0 Introduction

This Parramatta CBD Height Study has been prepared in support of the proposed development at 11-13 Aird Street to provide an assessment of the overall context of the Parramatta CBD Skyline and analysis of the proposed building height within that skyline.

The study is focused on existing development in the CBD, approved development that has not yet been constructed and development that is subject to planning approval pathways including Planning Proposals and Development Applications. The study has also included a number of sites that are not subject to a current planning application however may potentially accommodate development in the future.

The tables outlining the existing, future and potential future development in the Parramatta CBD are provided at **Attachment A**. The preliminary Architectural drawings and additional massing and height studies prepared by Project Tourism International Architecture are appended to the Planning Proposal.

2.0 The Proposed Development

The following section provides an analysis of the site in regards to the regional, local and site specific context.

2.1 Site Description

The Site is located at 11-13 Aird Street, in the Parramatta CBD, approximately 420m to the south-west of the Parramatta Train Station. The site is located between an existing five level car park (to the east) and an approved 13 storey residential development (to the west) which are both built to the site boundary. The development to the north of the site, across Aird Street, consists of a seven storey car park with another five level car park built to the rear (southern) property boundary.

The subject site is approximately 18m wide and is encircled on all boundaries by substantial developments. Indicative Architectural Drawings of the development are appended to the Planning Proposal. The proposed development comprises a single tower form above a six storey podium with a proposed height of 102m (34 storeys). The development is anticipated to accommodate approximately 128 residential apartments and includes retail and commercial tenancies.

A location plan of the site is provided at **Figure 1**.

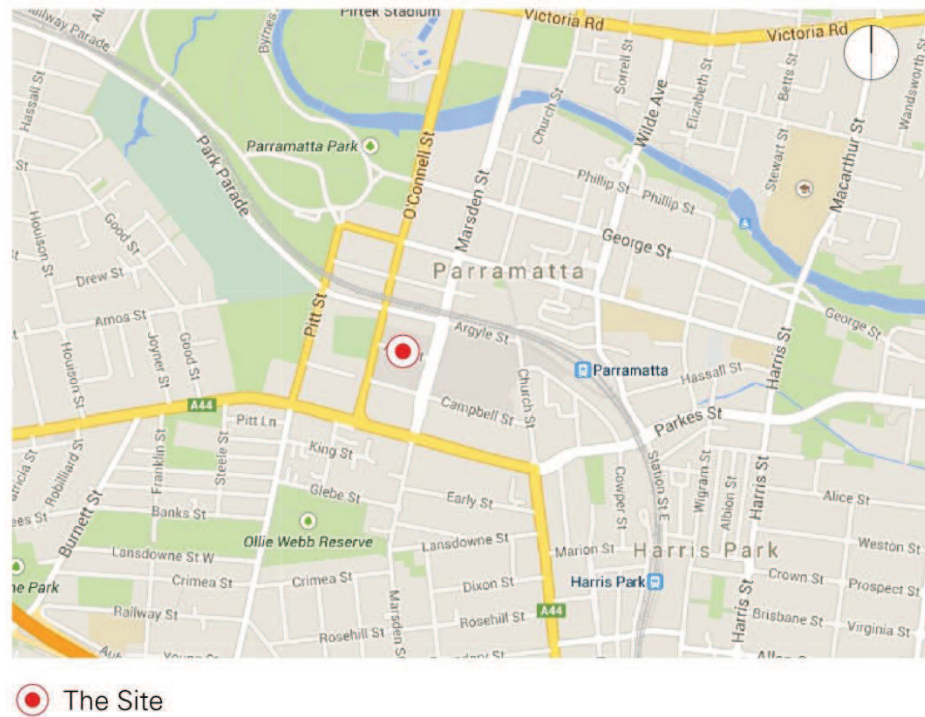


Figure 1 – Location Plan
Source: Nearmaps

2.2 Site Context

The development surrounding the subject site generally comprises commercial land uses with the Westfield Shopping Centre immediately to the east of the site and the Parramatta Business Centre to the west. Building heights in the immediate surrounding area generally comprise medium rise 5-7 storeys with taller, 50-90 storey towers (future approved developments Aspire and Parramatta Square Stage 5) in the Parramatta Square to the north-east of the site.

Overshadowing

The proposed tall and slender building form reduces the potential overshadowing impacts of the building as the area of shadow cast will move more quickly; hence no prolonged periods of overshadowing are caused and the impact is lessened. The location of the site is able to accommodate a building of substantial height as the proposed building will not project into and of the CBD sun access planes or overshadow the Parramatta Square or other public open spaces. The proposal is therefore compliant with Clause 29E of the City Centre LEP. The proposal will potentially create additional overshadowing to the residential properties to the south however the fast moving shadows will not cover one area for greater than 1 hour hence allowing these properties to easily receive a minimum of three hours of direct solar access.

Residential Amenity

Being a residential development the proposal is required to take into consideration *State Environmental Planning Policy 65 – Apartment Design Guide* (SEPP 65). It is noted that the building separation controls were not applied to the neighbouring development at 7-9 Aird Street due to the narrow characteristics of the sites and the CBD location.

As such a precedent for building separation to this property has been established in which applying SEPP 65 is not considered to be necessary in the given circumstances. Notwithstanding this, the interface between the two buildings will not include any windows or balconies that create opportunities for privacy or noise impacts.

The CBD function of the sites is primarily to accommodate development and that the advantages of living in a CBD location is therefore associated with disadvantages which may include a reduction in privacy, increased noise or shadows created by taller buildings.

Residential amenity and potential privacy and overlooking impacts into the neighbouring residential developments are able to be addressed through the orientation of the units and balconies and various mitigation measures such as screens and louvres. The tower form and additional building height afforded under the proposal will facilitate high quality regional views and ample solar access and natural ventilation. The additional building height will allow the lower levels to be used for car parking whilst the dwellings are provided in the airspace above the site.

The site is located approximately 460m from the Parramatta Railway Station and Bus transport interchange. Various CBD shopping and recreational facilities are also located within close walking proximity including the Parramatta Westfield Centre (directly adjacent to the site), the future Parramatta Square development and the future various Parramatta River redevelopments. The prominent CBD location affords a development with a height greater than that currently facilitated under the LEP controls.

Relevant Statutory Provisions

The site is zoned B4 Mixed Use under the *Parramatta City Centre LEP 2007*. Mixed use developments are permissible with consent in the B4 zone. The zone objectives are listed below:

1 Objectives of zone

- 1. To provide a mixture of compatible land uses.*
- 2. To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.*
- 3. To create opportunities to improve the public domain and pedestrian links within the Mixed Use Zone.*
- 4. To support the higher order Commercial Core Zone while providing for the daily commercial needs of the locality, including:*

- a) *commercial and retail development,*
- b) *cultural and entertainment facilities that cater for a range of arts and cultural activity, including events, festivals, markets and outdoor dining,*
- c) *tourism, leisure and recreation facilities,*
- d) *social, education and health services,*
- e) **high density residential development.**
- f) *To protect and enhance the unique qualities and character of special areas within the Parramatta city centre.*

Our emphasis

The proposal is considered to be consistent with the zone objectives as it facilitates a high density building.

3.0 Height Analysis

The following section provides an analysis of the proposed building at 11-13 Aird Street with regard to the potential impact of the height of the building on the Parramatta CBD and adjoining residential developments. The analysis looks at the Metropolitan context of the Parramatta CBD and examines the proposed building in the context of the Parramatta CBD skyline (macro) and the immediate local context (micro).

3.1 Regional/Sydney Metropolitan Context (Macro)

Under the Current *Metropolitan Strategy: A plan for Growing Sydney*, Parramatta's role in Metropolitan Sydney is identified as a premier regional CBD and Sydney's second CBD.

Parramatta is the primary CBD for Western Sydney. It has evolved as a key centre for transport, retail, cultural, residential and commercial development. Local planning controls for building height and floor space in the Parramatta CBD encourage well designed tall building forms that, over time, will create a visually prominent skyline when viewed from other parts of the Sydney metropolitan area. This will reinforce Parramatta's role as a second CBD and the major centre for Western Sydney.

3.2 Parramatta CBD Context

Development in the CBD forms a north-south axis along Church Street with an east-west axis formed along the rail line and the Parkes Street entrance to the CBD. The Parramatta Council endorsed Aspire tower, subject to a Planning Proposal and subsequent Development Application, will form the landmark CBD centre.

The CBD built form aims to reiterate a 'bell curve' shape with building heights transitioning down from the taller buildings in the city centre. The Parramatta CBD Planning Strategy seeks to remove numerical building height controls within the City Centre, facilitating significant developments in excess of 200m in height.

Stages 5 and 6 of the Parramatta Square are proposed 56 storey towers (approximately 190m), with various planning proposals and LEP and sun access plane height controls facilitating development of significant height both to the north and south of the railway station.

The Church Street spine of the city features a northern gateway with two landmark developments with frontage to the Parramatta River. The developments at 330 Church Street and 333-339 Church Street are both subject to planning proposals and feature building heights of 41 (150m) and 52 storeys (117m), respectively.

As shown in the Height Study (provided in the Architectural Drawings), development to the south of the railway line is currently concentrated along Church and Cowper Streets, with some potential future developments to reinforce the southern gateway to the city.

The CBD, whilst primarily based along the Church Street axis extends to the south-east with current and future development following the railway line. As shown in the Height Study (Architectural Drawings), to the north of the railway line the built form extends along Parkes Street to create a south-eastern sector of the CBD.

It is noted that the central portion of the CBD is currently underdeveloped in comparison with the wider CBD. The block bound by Macquarie Street, George

Street, Smith Street and Church Streets forms a significant portion of the City Centre and is predominantly zoned B3 Commercial Core. Under the *Parramatta City Centre LEP 2007* residential development is prohibited in the B3 Zone. The lack of development uptake in this portion of the CBD is likely a response to the strength of the commercial market and current trends focusing commercial development in other centres throughout Sydney. Development in this portion of the CBD however is expected to increase with the further growth of the Parramatta CBD and future market trends as these sites provide favourable maximum height limits of up to 126m in accordance with the Lancer Barracks height plane.

Parramatta City Centre Planning Framework Review

As detailed in the Planning Proposal, the CBD Planning Strategy recommends that the controls for the City Centre are to remove numerical height limits, with building heights dictated by the airspace requirements of the Blacktown Airport and overshadowing constraints. This proposed development scenario is shown in **Figure 2** below.



Figure 2 – Proposed Development Scenario

Source: *Parramatta City Centre Planning Framework Review*

The subject site is positioned in the south-western portion of the CBD and forms an important location in maintaining the skyline in the vicinity of the Westfield Shopping Centre. The Westfield occupies a significant portion of the locality and does not support the tower Style CBD buildings, rather it detracts from the consistent built form and skyline. As such, the site is able to accommodate a tower building to maintain the skyline in the south-western portion of the City Centre.

3.3 Local Context (Micro)

The proposal will provide a tower that is prominent in the immediate surrounding context. The proposal extends above the current existing development in the area to achieve a higher level of amenity and reinforce the skyline.

The *Parramatta LEP 2011* affords a stepped built form to the street blocks to the west and south of the site with maximum heights transitioning between 10m and 28m. These street blocks transition the CBD development down to the lower scale residential development to the south-west. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of properties with the potential to accommodate development in accordance with recommendations of the City Centre Planning Framework Review.

Development on the site in accordance with the City Centre LEP controls would create a poor built form outcome in respect to compliance with SEPP 65

residential amenity, solar access and natural ventilation requirements and the impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring developments. The existing LEP provisions would likely produce a development consisting of a single smaller tower form that would achieve a poor residential amenity outcome due to the surrounding development.

As the current and future development on adjoining sites is built to the boundary and does not incorporate boundary setbacks, the site accommodates the potential for a taller building comprising a single tower form. Pursuant to Clause 21(d) of the City Centre LEP, one of the objectives regarding building height is '*to ensure that taller development occurs on sites capable of providing appropriate urban form and amenity*'. As such, the maximum building height for the site is significantly taller than the existing development in the immediate area, although this is anticipated to change under the CBD Planning Strategy.

The location of the site in close proximity to Civic Place reinforces the 'bell curve' in the south-western portion of the CBD created by the existing and potential building heights and appropriately transition the proposed development from the CBD to the low scale residential development to the south-east.

4.0 Conclusion

- The site is appropriate to accommodate a building of taller height than currently facilitated under the LEP height controls due its prominent location at the south-eastern gateway to the CBD;
- Council has expressed a desire to achieve a CBD skyline that reflects a 'bell curve' with building heights transitioning down from the taller landmark buildings in Civic Place, namely the Aspire Tower and future Parramatta Square Stages 5 and 6. The proposed building height is subservient to the taller buildings in the City Centre and reinforces the desired 'bell curve' shape of the skyline, as expressed in the supporting Height Study and Architectural Massing Perspectives;
- The planned building heights and current and future development of the street blocks to the south-west of the site will appropriately step down the building heights between the city centre and the lower scale residential areas;
- The site is capable of accommodating a development of the proposed scale due to its close proximity to the train and bus transport interchanges. Further CBD amenities such as the Parramatta Westfield Complex, the future Parramatta Square and Parramatta River developments are within walking distance of the site;
- The site is not located within a sun access plane and will not have a detrimental impact on solar access to heritage items or areas of public open space;
- The proposed additional height afforded to the site will not have any significant environmental impacts through residential amenity, residential density, overshadowing or built form and will produce a more superior outcome than a building conforming to the LEP controls in terms of the amenity of residents in the development and in adjoining sites; and
- The strategic CBD location adjacent to Westfield affords a development with a height greater than that currently facilitated under the LEP controls. A Planning Proposal is the mechanism that has been used to provide other landmark and gateway development in the Parramatta CBD and as such, is appropriate to facilitate the proposed development.