

19 April 2018

Wayne Williamson  
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SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Wayne,

### **Sydney Metro and Martin Place Station Precinct - Peer Review**

Further to our recent conversations and meeting of 12 March, I provide a peer review of the recently updated View Impact Analysis report (March 2018) prepared by Tzannes Associates, supporting the Sydney Metro and Martin Place Station Precinct planning proposal, as submitted by Ethos Urban on behalf of Macquarie Corporate Holdings Pty Ltd (hereafter the Proposal). I confirm that in addition to the above I have also reviewed as relevant to the issue of visual impact the following documents:

- Planning proposal submitted by Ethos Urban;
- Heritage Council submission, 30 November 2017;
- TKD Architects submission responding to Heritage Commission submission, 29 January 2018.
- Urban Design of Sydney Metro Martin Place Station Precinct, Tzannes Associates, October, 2017;
- Sydney Metro Martin Place Station Precinct, Urban Design and Planning Context Review, Tzannes Associates, October, 2017;
- Sydney DCP 2012 - Martin Place Special Character Area.

### **Background**

The Proposal seeks to amend the planning controls in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 to:

- Allow development to occur above the 55 metre height limit to an increased area of the 39 Martin Place site (hereafter the South Site) up to the Hyde Park north sun access plane;
- Insert a new site specific clause that provides for additional floor space of up to 22:1 (on the South Site) and 18.5:1 (on the north site) only where it is to be used for employment purposes.

The Tzannes Associates View Impact Analysis report illustrates the sequence of existing and proposed building envelopes for the North and South Sites (Part 2 of the report), with reference to the South Site as follows:

- Existing building;
- LEP and DCP compliant envelope with 25m tower setback to Martin Place street alignment and tower setbacks along Castlereagh and Elizabeth Street frontages;
- Proposed SSD DA removing tower envelope setbacks along Castlereagh and Elizabeth Street frontages;
- The Proposal reducing the tower envelope setback from Martin Place street alignment to 8m;
- Additional tower envelope setback options of 10m, 12m, and 15m.

These scenarios have had their building envelopes modelled in 3D and presented as both line drawings and photomontages.

In response to the Proposal, the Heritage Council raised concerns regarding the proposed 8m setback to Martin Place, recommending instead that a minimum setback of between 10-15m would be more appropriate, and that refinement of the proposed design should mitigate any heritage impacts, including on the setting, context and views along Martin Place.

The View Impact Analysis report assesses the visual impact of the South Site building envelope for 8m, 10m, 12m and 15m setbacks for key viewpoints within Martin Place (Views A, B and C), each illustrated as photomontages.

## Review of Visual Impact Analysis Report

### Methodology

The method provided for the Visual Impact Analysis is overviewed in Part 1 of report as follows:

*'The view analysis studies contained within this report have been produced by Arterra Interactive. Tzannes has provided urban design and view impact analysis based on the view impact studies prepared by Arterra.'*

A detail methodology is provided with regard to the preparation of the photomontages.

The impact and commentary section of the report (Part 3) further assesses the three views under the headings of:

- 'Visual impact of the setback on Martin Place', and
- 'Impact of the setback on views along Martin Place'.

All three views have been prepared using a 24mm lens. This is understandable given the need to illustrate the Proposal contextually within the broader setting of Martin Place. However, it needs to be recognised that these photomontages are not an accurate representation of how the view is seen with the human eye. The view for people walking through the space is more immediate, with a smaller portion of the view seen at a significantly closer distance and greater level of detail. Adjacent buildings are perceived as being significantly higher than as illustrated within the photomontages.

### Visual Impact Analysis

The analysis of the visual impact of the setbacks on Martin Place is similar for each of the three views, and can be summarised as:

1. The appreciable difference between the four setbacks is negligible.
2. All proposed setback options are preferable to the existing condition as they include an integrated podium and tower solution.
3. The articulation of the tower and the podium through the principles set-out in the Urban Design Guidelines ensure the definition of the streetscape is maintained and enhanced.
4. The application of the urban design principles would be more effective:
  - a. than an increased setback in achieving built form separation between the podium and the tower, and
  - b. at achieving an appropriate architectural solution to support the heritage attributes of Martin Place.

The View Impact Analysis notes that the report should be read in conjunction with previously issued View Impact Analysis reports, and the 'Urban Design of Sydney Metro Martin Place Station Precinct' and 'Sydney Metro Martin Place Station Precinct, Urban Design and Planning Context Review' documents, both prepared by Tzannes Associates.

The View Impact Analysis report provides further commentary on the South Site which is additional to the above analysis, and can be summarised as follows:

- The proposed building envelope has a positive impact on the definition and character of Martin Place in respect of the proposed podium, and proposed direct relationship in podium height with 50 Martin Place;
- The proposed tower is taller than the existing tower and will reduce the extent of views of the sky, however this height has been as anticipated by City of Sydney's Sun Access Plane height control;
- The proposed 8m tower setback is consistent with towers at the eastern end of Martin Place, but is less than adjacent 25m setbacks and consequently reduces the extent of sky views compared with a compliant envelope and the SSD DA envelope;
- The (visual) impact is justifiable in the above 'specific site context' because:
  - The 8m setback is related to its context with the break in the definition of Martin Place by the MLC Centre and reduced tower setbacks east of this break;
  - The 8m setback is a typical setback under the DCP for towers in the city above street wall defining podium;

- 25m is not a typical or consistent setback for towers on Martin Place;
- The new railway interchange will be an important place that should be legible in the built form hierarchy of the city - maximizing height in areas with high public transport accessibility is appropriate;
- The compliant envelope does not achieve the above benefits;
- The specific conditions of the site ensure the precinct has high levels of access to sky views.

## Peer Review

### Methodology

This review has been undertaken with reference to principles within:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (GLVIA), The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (UK), Third edition, 2013.
- Sydney DCP 2012 - Martin Place Special Character Area (refer Attachment 1).

The key elements of the above GLVIA method comprise:

- sensitivity of the landscape (i.e. Martin Place townscape and proximate environs), and the visual receptors (e.g. people sitting in or walking through Martin Place), considered through an understanding of:
  - susceptibility of the place to the proposed change, and
  - the value of the place both as townscape, and as placed by upon it by the visual receptors who use it, and
- magnitude of the proposed change, considered through assessment of the:
  - scale / size of the proposed change
  - geographical extent of effects, and
  - duration and reversibility of the effects.

This report should be read in conjunction with the View Impact Analysis report. Photomontages from the View Impact Analysis report have been attached to this report. These show three key views within Martin Place looking towards the project (refer Attachments 2, 3 and 4), comprising:

- View A – taken from the western end of Martin place looking east;
- View B – taken from the western side of Pitt Street looking east; and
- View C – taken from the eastern end of Martin Place looking west.

The following is shown for each of the key views:

- existing view;
- photomontage showing the maximum allowable visual envelope within which the project would be set for the proposed 8m setback;
- photomontages showing the maximum allowable visual envelopes for potential 10m, 12m and 15m setbacks.

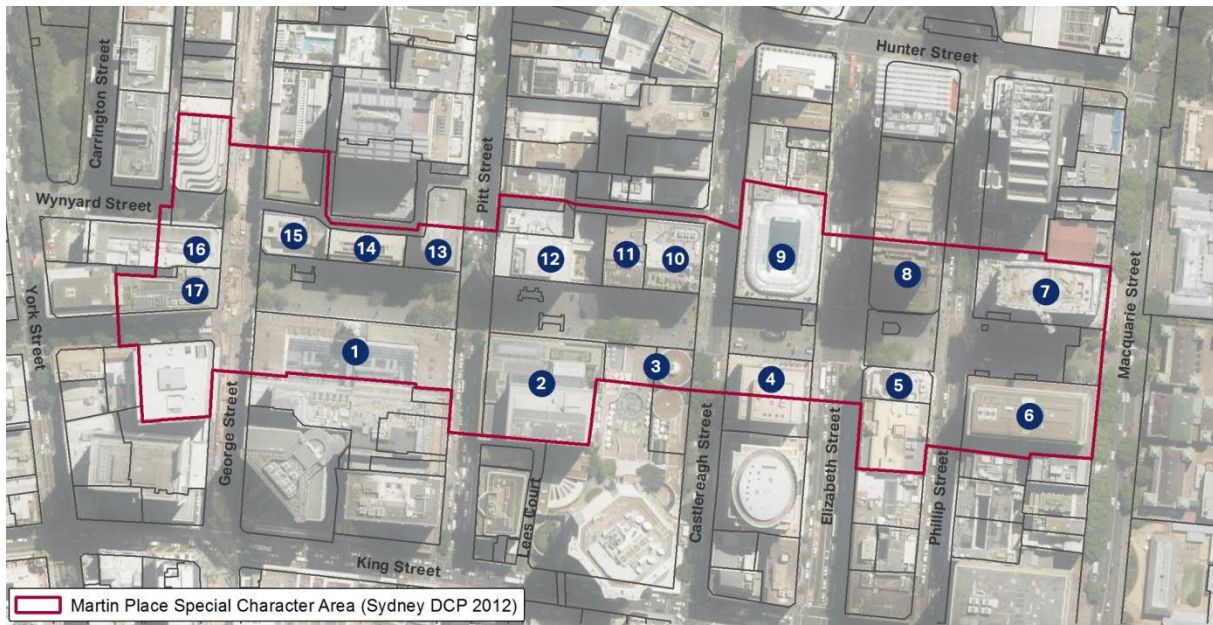
Each key view is analysed as follows:

- the existing view is described with regard to criteria including: landscape character; seen / unseen elements; visual relationships between buildings; and heritage features;
- each visual envelope / setback is assessed, describing issues such: visual prominence; visual mass; visual relationship with adjacent buildings; etc. and highlighting changing visual effects from other setbacks;
- a conclusion is drawn re. the setback that is considered to have the least adverse visual effect based on the assessed factors.

An assessment of the visual benefits and drawbacks of the preferred setback for each of the three key views is then undertaken to identify a preferred setback distance.

In addition to the above: several site inspections were undertaken over the period of the review; and I attended a formal presentation of the Proposal by the Proponent and Tzannes Architects at the office of NSW Planning & Environment on 5 April; and a follow-up workshoping of identified visual effects and associated architectural responses the following day with Tzannes Architects (Alec Tzannes and Ben Green) and Urban Ethos (Alexis Cella) at the office of Tzannes Architects.

Figure 1 maps the location of buildings referred to in this report.



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. 1 Martin Place – Former GPO  | 10. 38-46 Martin Place – Former MLC Building                   |
| 2. 5 Martin Place – Former Commonwealth Bank Building                   | 11. 32 Martin Place  |
| 3. MLC Centre   | 12. 20 Martin Place – ANZ Building                             |
| 4. 39 Martin Place - South Site   | 13. 10A-16 Martin Place – Former Colonial Mutual Life Building |
| 5. 53-63 Martin Place – Former Australian Provincial Assurance Building | 14. 4-10 Martin Place – Challis House                          |
| 6. Reserve Bank of Australia  | 15. Former Bank of Australasia                                 |
| 7. 58-60 Martin Place – Under construction                              | 16. 341 George Street – Former Bank of New South Wales         |
| 8. 52 Martin Place  | 17. Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Limited        |
| 9. 48-50 Martin Place – Former Government Savings Bank of NSW           |  |

**Figure 1: Location of buildings referred to in report**



The method recognises the dynamic nature of the views which are continuously changing as people pass through the space. The above analysis of each static view is used to identify key elements of change for each setback. These are considered generally applicable to a lesser or greater degree for each view when moving through the space. Assessment of a preferred setback is considered within this context.

Additionally, the changes in the view are incremental, subtle between each increment, and ranging over a total setback distance of only seven metres. Notwithstanding, it is considered that the above process facilitates a meaningful assessment of changing visual effects across this range.

Further, it is recognised that the articulation of the tower and the podium through the principles set-out in the Urban Design Guidelines will improve the definition of the streetscape over the representations of maximum allowable building envelope assessed in this review.

### **Assessment**

#### View A: View from the western end of Martin Place looking east

##### *Existing View*

The George Street end of Martin Place can arguably be considered the most visually cohesive grouping of buildings within Martin Place, closely reflecting the description within the Sydney 2012 Development Control Plan of *'a cohesive group of buildings with a consistent street wall ... similar architectural features, intricate architectural detailing, vertical emphasis and grand proportions at street level...'*. This western end comprises the historical starting point, and the ceremonial heart of Martin Place. It houses The Cenotaph, set within three grand street walls of historic sandstone and hard rock buildings. It is one of only two substantial flat, comfortable walking areas within Martin Place. Further, as described within the Statement of Significance for Martin Place (extracted from the State Heritage Inventory), Martin Place *'has the ability to evidence a key period of building activity ... in direct response to the Height of Building controls.'*

The existing view of the southern building edge provides an exemplary example of this building height control, with an intact sandstone street wall, affected by only minor visual incursions of modern built form which is setback some 25m or more from the street wall of both 1 Martin Place and 5 Martin Place. The tower of the MLC Centre is setback some 75m and unseen from this location (refer Attachment B).

More than half way up Martin Place, a small portion of the taller existing building at the South Site can be seen protruding beyond the street wall of 5 Martin Place (partially obscured by vegetation). However, it does not project above the Pitt Street street wall, retaining the sharp roofline edge with the sky, and helping to retain the strong perspective lines of the street wall façades converging towards an unseen vanishing point. This retention of boundary definition between the street wall and the sky creates a distinct, generous widening of visual access to the sky along the southern edge of Martin Place, framed by the street wall and GPO clock tower (refer Attachment B - 'View A' / 'Existing'). By comparison, the new building on the northern corner of Pitt Street (20 Martin Place – ANZ Building) projects well above the street wall, creating a visually contrasting 'high wall' that terminates the converging perspective of the historic buildings, and breaks the low sandstone street wall. The view of the sky is notably reduced along this edge.

The view from the western end of Martin Place (View A) can arguably be considered the most important of the three addressed in the View Impact Analysis report.

##### *8m Setback Envelope*

This setback creates the following effects when seen from View A (refer Attachment B):

- The introduction of a visually prominent tall tower element of substantial bulk within the context of the southern street wall, which importantly breaks the open skyline view of the street wall, seen from this location as a constricted 'canyon' form.
- The tower appears to be very close to the podium, causing it to be perceived as part of a new, uncharacteristic section of 'high' street wall, which visually 'pairs' with the new 20 Martin Place glass tower wall, re-framing the horizontal and vertical proportions of the place. The sense of the openness of the Martin Place corridor would be reduced. This effect comprises an important visual consideration when determining a setback distance for the proposed tower.

- The View Impact Analysis report states that articulation of the tower and podium will facilitate definition of the streetscape is maintained and enhanced. However, from this viewing point much of the articulation may not be visible during the warmer months (i.e. when these deciduous street trees are in leaf).

#### *10m Setback Envelope*

The 10m setback creates the following visual effects when seen from View A (refer Attachment B):

- The tower wall facing onto Martin Place, while still substantial, appears to sit just behind the street wall of 5 Martin Place.
- There is clearer separation between the podium and the tower, although the tower still appears to visually relate with the 5 Martin Place street wall.
- The bulk and scale of the tower is still commensurate with that of the proposed 8m setback tower.

#### *12m Setback Envelope*

The 12m setback creates the following effects when seen from View A (refer Attachment B):

- The tower wall sits noticeably behind the end of the 5 Martin Place street wall which assists in defining separation with the podium street wall.
- The bulk and scale of the tower is clearly reduced over that for the 8m setback, and still visually 'square' in proportions.
- The constrained 'volume' of the sky view between the ANZ tower and the proposed tower is noticeably improved over that for the proposed tower.

#### *15m Setback Envelope*

The 15m setback creates the following effects when seen from View A (refer Attachment B):

- The tower is visually setback close to midway through the street wall of 5 Martin Place and is more visually subservient in terms of bulk and scale, with the height of the envelope noticeably reduced compared with that of the proposed 8m setback.
- The volume of the sky view between the ANZ tower and proposed building envelope is noticeably improved over that for the 8m setback.
- The tower is noticeably more slender than for the 8m setback. However, the depth of the tower appears disproportionately slender

#### *Summary*

This view is distinguished from the other two views in that it is the only view in which the whole of the tower can be seen, i.e. both the front of the tower and back edge, i.e. the full tower form is seen in silhouette against the skyline. For the other two views, the back of the tower is unseen. The 15m setback provides the greatest volume of sky view of the three alternative setback options and is prominently setback from the podium edge, but the visual mass / proportions of the tower envelope are potentially not as visually complimentary with that of the 5 Martin Place building as for the 12m setback tower. Therefore, on balance I would suggest the 12m setback is the least visually intrusive of the three setback options in this instance.

#### View B: View from Pitt Street intersection with Martin Place looking west

##### *Existing View*

The view is tightly framed by the street wall on both sides of the Martin Place (refer Attachment C). The northern street wall looking east comprises: 20 Martin Place (ANZ building) at about 80m high, with the remaining four seen buildings providing a substantially consistent street wall height of between about 40m and 50m, comprising: 32 Martin Place, a contemporary masonry and glass building; 44 Martin Place, the former MLC building (SHR listing); 48-50 Martin Place, the former Government Savings Bank of NSW (SHR listing); and 52 Martin Place, a contemporary masonry and glass building with a tall tower setback some 25m back from the street wall, and which is unseen from this location. 60 Martin Place is currently under construction and will comprise a tall contemporary tower set at the street wall, and which will be substantially taller than the Reserve Bank opposite.

The southern side of the street wall comprises: 5 Martin Place (former Commonwealth Bank Building) at a street wall height of about 45m and the new set back tower unseen (Local heritage listing); the existing building on the South Site at a height of some 80m and set back some 5m from the street wall; 53-63 Martin Place, APA building at a street wall height of about 50m (SHR listing); and the Reserve Bank of Australia (Commonwealth listing) at about 80m high. Notwithstanding there is a gap in the line of the street wall caused by the deep setback of the MLC tower, the impression of a substantial street wall along this edge is still quite strong when viewed from this vantage point.

The landscape character of this area is significantly less visually cohesive than the western 'sandstone' ceremonial area as seen in View A. The corridor feels less visually enclosed, due in part to there being no centrally located tree planting as in View A, and the sky view subsequently penetrating deeper into the public space between the street wall.

A further key difference between this view and View A is that Martin Place is now climbing a moderate slope to the ridgeline at its eastern end, with buildings stepping up the street. A wide waterfall feature provides a platform behind it for staging events and steps for seating. Pedestrian through access is via moderately steep, wide access ways either side of the central entertainment platform, and which climb about 4m between Pitt Street and Castlereagh Street.

The view comprises a mix of materials and architectural styles including: ornate, grand heritage stone and tiled buildings; contemporary masonry and glass buildings; the existing South Site tower; and the Reserve Bank building at the top of the street. The 60 Martin Place site opposite the Reserve Bank is currently subject to the construction of a new tall tower that will be set on the street wall. Further, the building on the South Site and the Reserve Bank comprise visually uncharacteristic street wall tower elements, both at a height of some 80m.

#### *8m Setback Envelope*

This setback creates the following effects when seen from View B (refer Attachment C):

- The podium envelope is set well above the height of 50 Martin Place opposite (Note: The Proposal states that the proposed podium will closely reflect the height and form of the 50 Martin Place façade).
- The tower envelope projects well above the existing street wall height of between about 50m to 80m in height. As such, it comprises a new and uncharacteristic tall tower element, set closely behind a podium street wall edge. This closely stepped setback effect is out of character with all of the street wall buildings seen in this view, including the future 60 Martin Place tower.
- The tower breaks the broadly regular line of the southern street wall as seen from the street, projecting well above 5 Martin Place street wall, unlike the existing South Site building which barely projects above the building when seen from this location.
- The visual mass of the seen part of the building projecting above the 5 Martin Place street wall could potentially be reduced if the top of the building were flat, level with the sun access plane edge.
- Given the proximity of the viewer to the building, the connection between the podium and the tower would be visually prominent from this location, and as such proposed articulation of this interface would assist with defining clear separation between the tower and the podium through the principles set-out in the Urban Design Guidelines.

#### *10m Setback Envelope*

The visual effects of the tower envelope from this setback are similar to those for the 8m setback (refer Attachment C).

#### *12m Setback Envelope*

The 12m setback brings the north face of the tower broadly in line with the face of the 5 Martin Place street wall when seen from this location (refer Attachment C). This gives a sense of visual connection with the 5 Martin Place street wall, which provides an element of visual coherence to the tower setback distance.

### *15m Setback Envelope*

The 15m setback brings the north face of the tower partially behind the 5 Martin Place street wall when seen from this location, and the extending cornice of the 5 Martin Place street wall seen to project almost fully across the tower face. These factors noticeably reduce the visual prominence of the tower (refer Attachment C). The visual mass and prominence of that part of the tower seen projecting above the 5 Martin Place street wall is significantly reduced over that seen with the 8m setback, and noticeably reduced over the 12m setback.

### *Summary*

The setback between the podium edge and tower envelope is most clearly defined for the 15m setback. Further, the 15 metre setback noticeably reduces visibility of the tower wall, helping to reduce the visual prominence of the tower. The loss of sky view as seen from this location is proportionally relatively minor for all setbacks, e.g. when compared with View A. On balance I would suggest the 15m setback is the least visually intrusive of the three setback options. However, I would also consider the 12m setback to be an acceptable option.

### View C: View from Martin Place near Macquarie Street looking west

#### *Existing view*

The existing view looking west is taken from the flat northern plaza that addresses the Reserve Bank, 60 Martin Place and Macquarie Street (refer Attachment D). The view to the open sky is extensive from this location due to the elevated viewing location at the high point of Martin Place, looking down towards George Street with the street wall buildings stepping down the street and the 25m setback of the tall tower at 52 Martin Place. The effect is further enhanced due to there be no buildings significantly projecting above and behind the George Street street wall of the former Bank of New South Wales and former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney buildings, which comprise the visual terminus of the eastern Martin Place view.

As with View B, the landscape character of the eastern end of Martin Place is less visually cohesive and enclosed than the western end of the street as represented in View A. Tower elements are prevalent within this view, comprising: the Reserve Bank; the MLC Centre tower (seen just projecting beyond the Reserve Bank); 52 Martin Place; and the South Site tower. Additionally, the 60 Martin Place tower (in construction) will be substantially taller than the Reserve Bank opposite, and feature prominently within this view. As with the Proposal, the tower will have a relatively small setback behind a podium element. The gap in the southern street wall between the South Site building (39 Martin Place) and 5 Martin Place is clearly perceptible.

The open sky volume is extensive and opens out in similar proportions and heights across both sides of the southern street wall and northern street wall.

### *8m Setback Envelope*

This setback creates the following effects when seen from View C (refer Attachment D):

- The podium envelope is set well above the height of 50 Martin Place opposite (Note: The Proposal states that the proposed podium will closely reflect the height and form of the 50 Martin Place façade).
- The removal of the existing building on the South Site opens up a small part of the sky view above the podium when seen from this location (similar for all setbacks).
- The tower envelope projects well above the existing street wall height of between some 50m to 80m in height. As such, it comprises a new and uncharacteristic tall tower element along the southern street wall of Martin Place (but not the northern street wall given the 60 Martin Place tower currently under construction). This effect is not as pronounced as for View A and View B given the adjacent visually prominent, well setback towers within the MLC Centre and at 52 Martin Place.
- The tower envelope is set visually closely behind a podium street wall edge, such that it is seen slightly projecting beyond the street wall of the former APA building (SHR listing), including the angled corner which comprises a visually integral part of the street wall edge. The full building outline of this building is set against the backdrop of the tower and podium.
- The tower envelope is seen as having a similar mass to that of the former APA building.

- The junction between the tower and the podium is barely perceptible from this location, with the tower visually reading as part of the street wall.
- The volumetric openness of the sky view is noticeably reduced and constrained.

#### *10m Setback Envelope*

This setback creates the following effects when seen from View C (refer Attachment D):

- The tower is only marginally further set back. It no longer projects beyond the street wall of the former APA building. The outline of the upper detailed section of the building is still set against the backdrop of the tower and podium rather than being seen in silhouette against the skyline, a key characteristic of building views along the southern street wall.
- The tower envelope is still seen as having a similar mass to the former APA building, and effectively appears to be part of the street wall.
- The tower envelope is still seen as having a similar mass to that of the former APA building.
- The junction between the tower and the podium is not visible from this location, with the tower visually reading as a part of the street wall (notwithstanding the setback).
- The volumetric openness of the sky view is noticeably reduced and constrained.

#### *12m Setback Envelope*

This setback creates the following effects when seen from View C (refer Attachment D):

- The tower is only marginally further set back, although it no longer projects beyond the street wall of the former APA building, and now aligns with the central parapet of the building. This causes the setback of the tower to be noticeably more pronounced than for the 10m setback.
- The outline of the upper detailed section of the building is still set against the backdrop of the tower, rather than being seen in silhouette against the skyline, which is a key characteristic of the existing view.
- The tower envelope is still seen as having a similar mass to the former APA building, although the setback behind the main façade causes the proportions of the tower to appear more visually subservient to those of the APA building.
- The volumetric openness of the sky view is noticeably increased over that of the 8m setback.

#### *15m Setback Envelope*

This setback creates the following effects when seen from View C (refer Attachment D):

- The tower is now seen to be considerably setback behind the former APA building street wall (at the mid-point of the APA building façade), but still presents as having substantial mass similar to that of the former APA building.
- The tower is still seen to be projecting forward of the angled corner of the street wall but is substantially setback from the street wall.

#### *Summary*

The proportions of the 15m setback tower appear to be visually complimentary with those of the former APA building and provide the most visually definitive setback of the three alternative options. On balance I would consider this option to be the least visually intrusive of the four setbacks assessed. However, I would also consider the 12m setback to be an acceptable option.

#### Martin Place Special Character Area – Principles

Sydney DCP 2012 - The Martin Place Special Character Area lists eight principles for the conservation and enhancement of Martin Place with regard to new development (refer Attachment A). With regard to the four tower setbacks assessed in this report and the potential for adverse visual outcomes, all of these can broadly be seen to align with the DCP other than for the following, as follows:

- (c) *Retain and enhance the urban character, scale and strong linear enclosure of Martin Place by requiring new buildings to:*
- ii. *have street frontage heights consistent with the prevailing form of buildings in the area.*

As discussed above, the proposed smaller tower setback distances are considered in some cases to visually 'read' as part of the street wall, i.e. because they are so close to the podium street wall and subsequently visually prominent within Martin Place corridor. Additionally, the proposed close setback

of a tower over podium currently comprises a visually uncharacteristic building form within Martin Place, noting that the 60 Martin Place building (under construction) will have similar characteristics. This visual prominence effect is in contrast to the other towers set on podium within Martin Place, and particularly to the southern street wall, with the following approximate setbacks:

- 35m setback to 1 Martin Place (the GPO);
- 25m setback to the new tower at 5 Martin Place.

Within this context for the four assessed setbacks and as described above, adverse visual effects have generally been seen to decrease with increasing setback of the tower.

*(h) Conserve and enhance the heritage significance of the nineteenth and twentieth century institutional and commercial buildings and their settings.*

The introduction of a new, visually uncharacteristic close setback tower on podium building form, could be considered as not conserving and enhancing the heritage significance of the nineteenth and twentieth century institutional and commercial buildings and their settings. As above, adverse visual effects arising from this approach can generally be seen to decrease with increasing setback of the tower. Deeper setbacks for the three assessed views were considered to be providing acceptable levels of visual separation between the podium street wall and tower.

#### Proposed setback

The above assessment finds the following:

- For View 'A', the least visually intrusive setback distance is considered to be 12m. This view is distinguished from the other two views in that it is the only one in which the whole of the tower can be seen, i.e. both the front and back of the tower, with the full tower form seen in silhouette against the skyline. For the other two views, the back of the tower is unseen. For this view, the visual mass and proportions of the slimmer tower with the 15m setback are considered on balance to be less visually complimentary with the visual mass and proportions of the 5 Martin Place building than those of the 12m setback tower.
- For View 'B', the least visually intrusive tower is considered to be that with the 15m setback, due primarily to: the setback between the podium edge and tower envelope being the most clearly defined of the three alternatives; and that it noticeably reduces visibility of the tower wall, helping to reduce the visual prominence of the tower.
- For View 'C', the least visually intrusive setback distance is considered to be 15m given: the proportions of the 15m setback tower appear to be visually complimentary with those of the former APA building; and they provide the most visually definitive setback of the three alternative options. However, the 12m setback is also considered to be an acceptable outcome in that the tower no longer projects beyond the street wall of the former APA building, and the proportions of the tower relative to the former APA building are seen to be complimentary.

Of the three alternative setbacks assessed (10m, 12, and 15m), on balance the 12m setback is considered to be the least visually intrusive. The rationale for this relates primarily to:

- View 'A' and the visual relationship between the proposed 12m and 15m setback towers with the 5 Martin Place building, with the 12m setback tower appearing to be visually preferable, as discussed above; and
- View 'A' is considered to be the most important of the three views, and potentially the most susceptible to adverse visual effects arising from the proposal.

#### General observations

##### *South street wall character*

The two tallest buildings set along the southern edge of Martin Place (the Reserve Bank and existing building on the South Site) both appear to be in the order of 80m tall, as does the GPO tower and the recent tower addition to 5 Martin Place (25m setback). The proposed tower, which appears to be in the order of a further one third higher than these elements, would comprise an uncharacteristic new tower element along the southern side of Martin Place.

Other than the MLC Centre and the existing building on the South Site, all of the buildings along the southern edge of Martin Place are subject to heritage orders as follows:

- the GPO (SHR and local listings);
- Commonwealth Bank Building (Sydney LEP 2012 (local) listing);
- Former Australian Provincial Assurance Building (SHR and local listing); and
- the Reserve Bank (Commonwealth and local listing).

Given that none of these buildings or the MLC Centre are likely to be replaced in the foreseeable future, re-development of the South Site appears likely to provide the only new building to the southern street wall for well into the future. The outcome of this design proposal will effectively set the character of the south street wall of Martin Place for the foreseeable future. A key characteristic of the southern edge of Martin Place is that all of the current street wall buildings are either fully, or near fully seen against an open skyline, and where towers are on podium, these are well setback from the street wall. The proposed tower, with an 8m setback, significantly increased height above all other buildings along the southern edge of Martin Place, and break in the skyline street wall would significantly change the character of the southern street wall in particular.

#### *Proximity of tower to street*

Unlike the existing 25m setback towers on the southern street wall, all of the assessed tower setback options will be relatively close to it, and will comprise prominent elements when viewed from the public domain. Therefore, unlike the 'light' glass tower above 5 Martin Place for instance which is either not seen from the public domain, or seen as a separate, strongly contrasting architectural element (due to the MLC Centre opening in the street wall), the more closely setback tower would be viewed as an integral part of the streetscape/ building form. Within this context, consideration should be given to the podium and tower having an integrated architectural language of form and materials that recognises the whole building as being 'of the place', e.g. a substantial use of the masonry used for the podium may also be appropriate for the tower.

#### Discussion

The building of a tower to the height of the solar access plane and with a 25m setback for the South Site is currently a permissible outcome for the proponent under Sydney LEP 2012. This would provide an optimal street wall outcome in keeping with similar setbacks to the GPO and 5 Martin Place. However, the narrowness of the resulting tower would itself comprise a highly visually uncharacteristic building form within the visual catchment of the Martin Place public domain. This would particularly be the case when seen from View A, arguably the most important of the three key views.

As discussed above, the 8m setback of the Proposal would introduce an uncharacteristic new building form to the southern street wall, in conjunction with the increased tower height above the other towers (about a 1/3 increase in height) along this side of the street. However, as above, the new 60 Martin Place building to the northern street wall will have a similarly close tower setback behind podium and increased tower height.

All of the assessed setback options for the Proposal comprise uncharacteristic building forms relative to Sydney LEP 2012, and to the two existing towers (Reserve Bank and South Site), each setback some 5m from the southern street wall.

Within the context of the above, all three additional setback options are compromise alternatives, none of which are optimal, and all of which will introduce a singularly new 'half-way' podium/ tower built form that sits broadly between the street wall and a 25m setback. Further, the assessment has been undertaken on the basis of maximum allowable building envelope forms. This does not allow for the assessment of an architectural response to the site, including articulation of the podium/ tower interface, and the visual relationship between the tower and the podium, other than through the high level design principles set out within the Proposal and the Urban Design Guidelines.

#### *The Proposal*

Within this context, although the Proposal incorporates an uncharacteristically close tower setback, of the four setback options, it can be seen to most strongly/ positively address the street. It would unambiguously comprise a new, dominant podium/ tower element within Martin Place, that subject to



architecturally/ visually addressing the above podium/ tower articulation issues, would also fulfill other architectural functions described within the View Impact Analysis report (Tzannes Associates, March 2018) that may not be as successfully met with increased setbacks, e.g.: applying a city built form hierarchy that emphasises important places such as the Martin Place Metro Station, and its importance as an employment hub with the city; definition of Martin Place related to its context with the MLC Centre break in the street wall; and a design that supports the heritage attributes of Martin Place within a modern architectural idiom.

Therefore, while the main finding of this review, based on an assessment of maximum building envelopes and design principles within the Proposal, 12m is considered to provide the most acceptable tower setback building, I believe the Proposal also has the potential to provide an acceptable outcome.

#### Recommendation

Consider the use of an integrated architectural language of form and materials that recognises the whole building as being 'of the place', e.g. a substantial use of the masonry used for the podium also being used for the tower.

#### Conclusion

The building of a tower to the height of the solar access plane for the South Site is a permissible outcome for the proponent under Sydney LEP 2012. This report has assessed three increased alternative tower setback distances of 10m, 12m and 15m between a podium street wall and tower, in addition to the proposed 8m setback, using maximum allowable building envelopes, and with reference to high level architectural design guidelines. On this basis, a 12m setback has been determined to be the most visually appropriate of the four alternatives.

However, the Proposal is also seen as a potentially acceptable outcome, notwithstanding it would comprise an unambiguously new, dominant podium/ tower element within Martin Place.

Yours faithfully

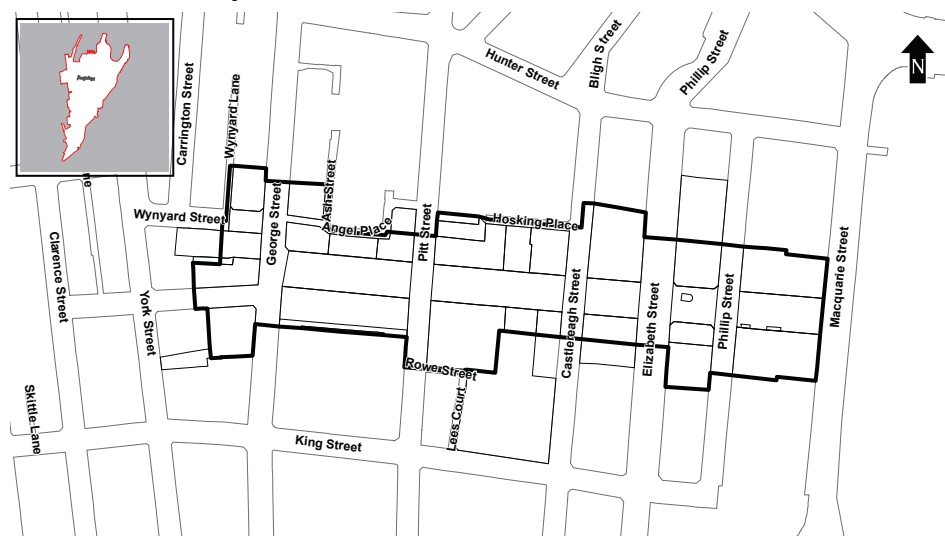
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**Attachment A**

Sydney DCP 2012 - Martin Place Special Character Area

### 2.1.7 Martin Place Special Character Area



Martin Place is of social, cultural and historic significance, being the site of various monuments, in particular the Cenotaph, as well as the site of many historical events, which reinforced its image as the civic and ceremonial heart of the City. Its initiation was after the siting of the GPO in 1863, as a small meeting place in the front of the post office. Its subsequent planned evolution and development illustrates the application of city planning principles of the 1880s to 1930s, which culminated in its complete pedestrianisation in 1970. It represents the financial heart of the City, containing significant public and financial buildings.

Martin Place consists of a cohesive group of buildings with a consistent street wall of up to 45m. These buildings have similar architectural features, characterised by the use of richly textured masonry facades, intricate architectural detailing, vertical emphasis and grand proportions at street level, representative of their function as housing various major public and business institutions. The built form encloses a significant linear public space, with strong vistas terminated to the east and west by significant buildings. The GPO clock tower is an important landmark visible from various points within Martin Place.

Martin Place is also significant for its supportive network of lanes, being rare examples of pedestrian thoroughfares reminiscent of Victorian Sydney laneways such as Angel Place and Ash Lane.

#### Principles

- (a) Development must achieve and satisfy the outcomes expressed in the character statement and supporting principles.
- (b) Conserve and enhance the significance of Martin Place as one of Central Sydney's grand civic and ceremonial spaces, and as a valued business location.
- (c) Retain and enhance the urban character, scale and strong linear enclosure of Martin Place by requiring new buildings to:
  - i. be built to the street alignment;
  - ii. have street frontage heights consistent with the prevailing form of buildings in the area; and
  - iii. to have building setbacks above those street frontage heights.
- (d) Protect and extend sun access and reflected sunlight to Martin Place during lunchtime hours from mid-April to the end of August.

## LOCALITY STATEMENTS

- (e) Provide sun access to significant sandstone buildings in Martin Place to improve the ground level quality of the public space.
- (f) Protect existing significant vistas to the east and west and ensure new development will not detrimentally affect the silhouette of the GPO clock tower.
- (g) Retain human scale at street level, while respecting and positively responding to the monumental nature of the place.
- (h) Conserve and enhance the heritage significance of the nineteenth and twentieth century institutional and commercial buildings and their settings.

**Attachment B**

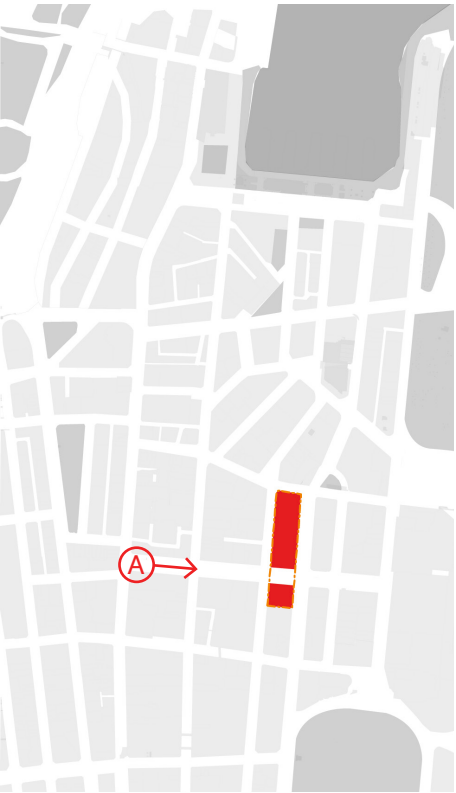
Excerpt from View Impact Analysis Report (January 2018) prepared by Tzannes Associates – View ‘A’  
Photomontages



3 Key Public Views

3.1 Martin Place

3.1.2 View A - 24mm lens



Key Map

Legend

- Martin Place Precinct
- Martin Place Precinct outline
- Building envelope

Note - Existing buildings shown on compliant envelope photomontage for comparative modelling purposes.



Existing



8m Setback Envelope



### 3 Key Public Views

#### 3.1 Martin Place

##### 3.1.2 View A - 24mm lens



10m Setback Envelope



12m Setback Envelope



15m Setback Envelope



**Attachment C**

Excerpt from View Impact Analysis Report (January 2018) prepared by Tzannes Associates – View 'B'  
Photomontages

3 Key Public Views




3.1 Martin Place

3.1.3 View B - 24mm lens



Key Map

Legend

-  Martin Place Precinct
-  Martin Place Precinct outline
-  Building envelope

Note - Existing buildings shown on compliant envelope photomontage for comparative modelling purposes.



Existing



8m Setback Envelope



### 3 Key Public Views

#### 3.1 Martin Place

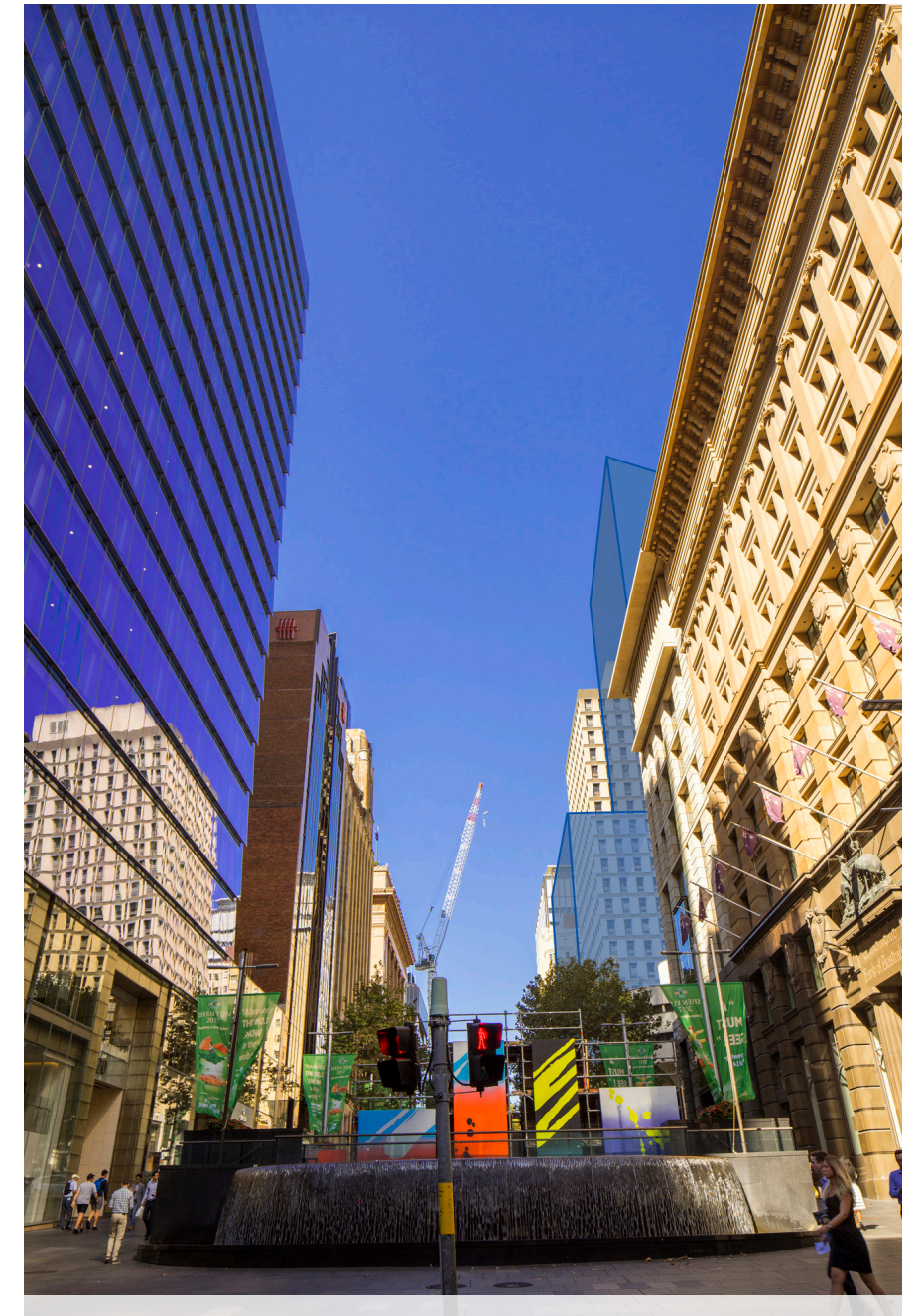
##### 3.1.3 View B - 24mm lens



10m Setback Envelope



12m Setback Envelope



15m Setback Envelope

**Attachment D**

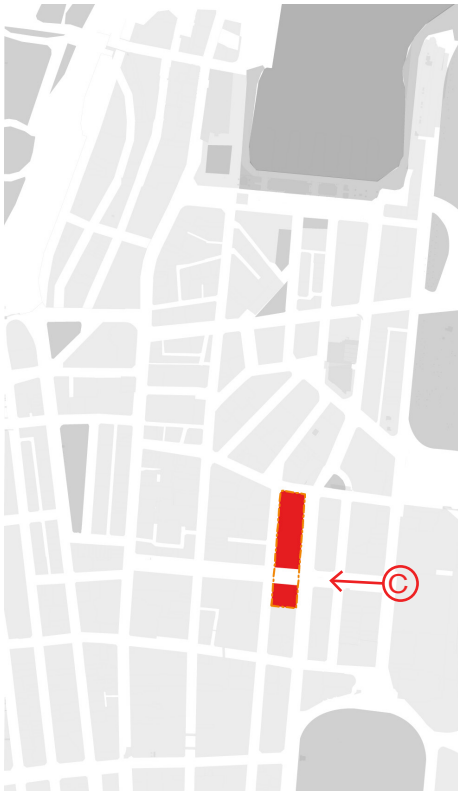
Excerpt from View Impact Analysis Report (January 2018) prepared by Tzannes Associates – View ‘C’  
Photomontages



3 Key Public Views




3.1 Martin Place

3.1.4 View C - 24mm lens



Key Map

Legend

-  Martin Place Precinct
-  Martin Place Precinct outline
-  Building envelope

Note - Existing buildings shown on compliant envelope photomontage for comparative modelling purposes.



Existing



8m Setback Envelope



3 Key Public Views

3.1 Martin Place

3.1.4 View C - 24mm lens



10m Setback Envelope



12m Setback Envelope



15m Setback Envelope