

24 May 2021

## **Re. Urban Resign Commentary in regard to the Planning Proposal for No. 3 Ellis Street, Chatswood.**

GM Urban Design and Architecture (GMU) have been engaged by MPG AU Pty Ltd (henceforth referred to as the client) to provide advice and recommendations to inform an appropriate built form outcome for the site located at No. 3 Ellis Street, Chatswood (henceforth referred to as the subject site). GMU's advice forms as part of a Planning Proposal process currently undertaken for the subject site.

The subject site is known as SP 2715 and forms part of the Willoughby Local Government Area (LGA). The site is subjected to applicable controls under the Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012 intended to guide future development outcomes for the area. GMU understand Willoughby Council is currently undergoing the process of amending the LEP following the exhibition of the Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy 2036 (henceforth referred to as the CBD Strategy). According to information available on Council's website, the CBD Strategy was endorsed by Willoughby Council in 2017 after significant public consultation and exhibition. The CBD Strategy was later endorsed by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in August 2020.

In June 2020, GMU prepared an Urban Design Report on behalf of the client. The report summarised the findings of GMU's analysis of the existing and desired future local character of the area to inform built form investigations for the subject site. The purpose of the Urban Design report was to consider two (2) concept massing options for mixed-use development and ensure the capacity to provide appropriate urban design responses given the recent changes to the applicable controls associated with the CBD Strategy. GMU's Urban Design report (June 2020) also considered the two (2) concept schemes against the State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 - Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development (SEPP 65). The Urban Design report concluded that both concept options (Options 1 and 2) provided a well-considered solution for the site to satisfy the objectives nominated in the CBD Strategy.

Since then, the CBD Strategy was endorsed by DPIE and GMU understand that the client and project team have been liaising with Council staff to further refine and develop the concept Option 1 indicative scheme (prepared by MGA Architects P/L).

### **Revised Option 1 scheme**

As part of GMU's recent engagement, we have reviewed the revised Option 1 scheme prepared by MGA Architects P/L (May 2021). This letter includes GMU's commentary in regard to the revised design which is henceforth referred to as the revised Option No. 1 scheme. The views expressed in this letter are informed by our review of the following documents as provided by our client:

- Architecture Plans & Elevations prepared by MGA Architects P/L, May 2021
- Development Schedule prepared by MGA Architects P/L, May 2021
- List of amendments prepared by MGA Architects P/L, May 2021

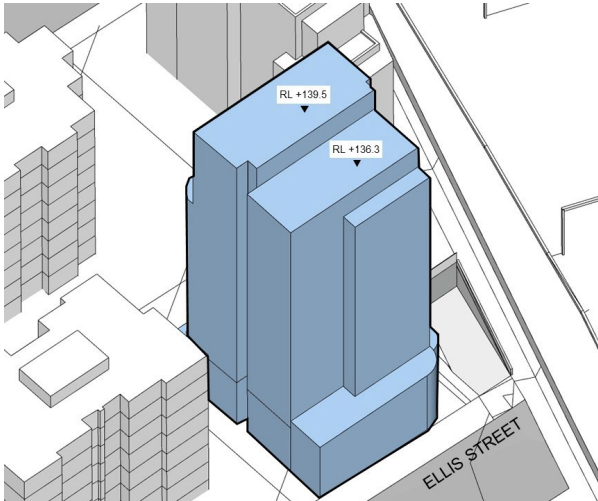
We understand the revised Option No. 1 scheme (May 2021) includes the following amendments compared to the Original Concept Option No. 1 which was included in GMU's Urban Design Report (June 2020):

- Reconfigured floor plan layouts for the upper two (2) levels and associated changes to the building profile and façade compositions;
- Reduced maximum building height at the south-west corner of the site to RL 134.0;
- Reduced maximum building height at the north-west corner of the site to RL 136.3;
- Reduced FSR from 4.7:1 to 4.5:1 which equates to a reduction in residential Gross Floor Area of 162m<sup>2</sup>;
- Reduced number of units from 33 to 30 units;
- Minor adjustments to the car parking layouts.

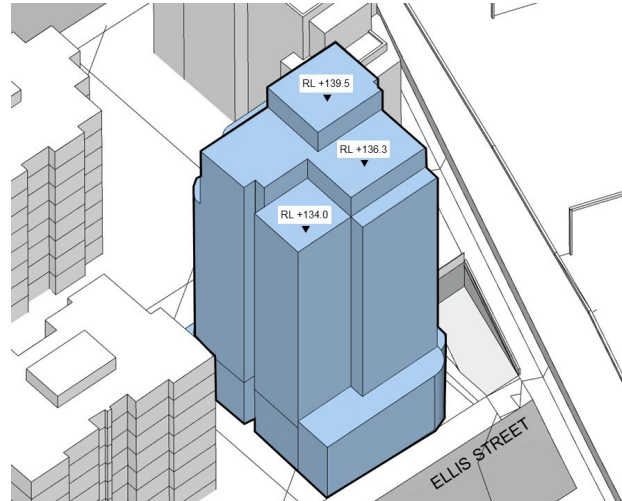
Council's CBD Strategy includes a vision, principles and guiding principles for the Chatswood CBD area. The Strategy emphasises the retention of solar access to nominated public spaces and adjacent conservation areas as a key objective to preserve good public amenity to the area. The subject site is therefore affected by a sun access plane under the CBD Strategy. The sun access plan restricts the maximum building height to ensure mid-winter solar access to Chatswood Oval, which is nominated as sun access protected from 12 noon to 2 pm during mid winter as illustrated in the diagrams below.



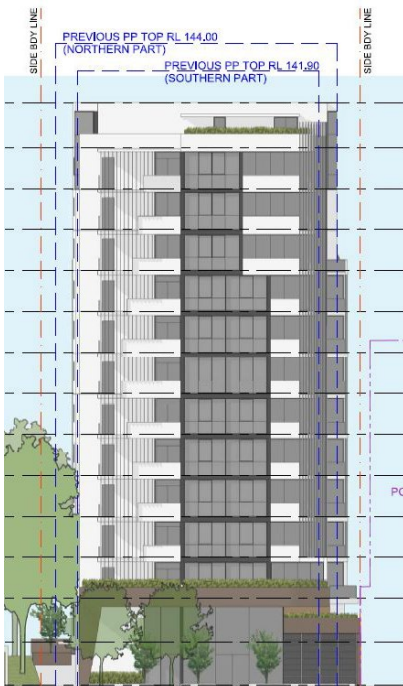
The increased setback to the west allows the predominant part of the upper building alignment to remain below the Sun Access Protection Plane (and the Pans Ops plane), as indicated in the elevational studies (Ellis Street) prepared by MGA Architects P/L below.



**Building envelope: Original concept Option No. 1 (June 2020)**



**Building envelope: Revised Option No. 1 scheme (May 2021)**



**Original concept Option No. 1 (June 2020)**



**Revised Option No. 1 scheme (May 2021)**



**Zone of reduced bulk and scale**

Aside from reduced overshadowing impact, the proposed reduction in building height along the western part of the subject site creates variation and visual interest to the building profile as presented to the public domain. It also creates slender proportions to accentuates the verticality of the built form at the south eastern corner of the site.

The alternative configuration of the upper floor levels provides further benefits, allowing for increased communal open space provisions to improve residential amenity outcomes. According to the Development Schedule prepared by MGA Architects P/L (May 2021), recent design amendments increase the amount of communal open space from approximately 97.92m<sup>2</sup> to 220m<sup>2</sup> which equates to 27% of the site area. GMU understand the revised Option No. 1 scheme continues to provide 13% of the site area as deep soil zone (105m<sup>2</sup>).

## Conclusion

GMU consider that the positive outcomes provided by the original Option No. 1 scheme (GMU's June 2020 report) continue to be delivered by the revised Option No. 1 scheme (May 2021) including:

- 100% solar access to apartments;
- Natural and cross-ventilation to 100% of apartments;
- Preservation of solar access to Chatswood Oval and Croquet Club;
- Consolidated and flexible allocation of communal and private open spaces;
- Enhanced activation and passive surveillance to the public domain interface;
- Design excellence through the provision of contemporary architectural design solutions.

Furthermore, the revised scheme will provide improved outcomes as follows:

- Increased communal open space area;
- Improved amenity to the apartments located at the upper levels;
- Variation to the building profile;
- Slender built form proportions;
- Reduced overshadowing impacts including to Chatswood Park and Chatswood Oval.

Upon review of the information provided, GMU considers the revised Option No. 1 as the preferred indicative scheme as it continues to provide appropriate outcomes in response to the surrounding existing and future context in terms of built form, open space, amenity and streetscape character. The proposal provides an improved response to the key objectives nominated by Council's CBD Strategy to complement and enhance the emerging character of Ellis Street and surrounding areas.