

**Wollongong Design Review meeting
For proposed mixed use development at the corner of Rawson Street and
Railway Parade Wollongong, DA-2014/1262.**

Held at Wollongong council on 21st July 2015

Present:

Scott Millican, PRD Architects
Peter Rasa, PRD Architects

Mark Riordan, Wollongong City Council
Pier Panozzo, Wollongong City Council
Anne Starr, Wollongong City Council

Gabrielle Morrish, Panel member
David Jarvis, Panel member

Design development drawings were tabled by the applicant in response to comments previously made by the panel (DRP meeting held on 11.5.15).

Project description

The proposal is located at the edge of Wollongong's main commercial precinct, on a prominent corner site adjacent to the railway and within easy walking distance from the railway station.

The proposal consists of a 22 storey residential tower positioned on top of a 3 storey podium. The ground floor of the podium now houses several retail tenancies. Car parking is sleaved by residential units which are located on the upper two levels of the podium. Additional parking is located in two basement levels

Context

The tower has been relocated on the north western corner of the podium and additional contextual information has been provided, as requested by the panel.

The additional contextual information provided demonstrates that the proposed built form, responds to its immediate context in a reasonable manner. Appropriate separation can be achieved between potential future building on adjacent sites and the long narrow shadow created by the tower moves quickly along neighbouring sites, limiting the extent of over shadowing.

The least convincing contextual relationship is highlighted by the proposed northern elevation (DA17-C). This drawing depicts a permissible building form on the adjoining site to the east. The neighbouring building form outlined in this drawing is an 80m high tower, sitting on top of a 5 to 6 storey high podium. Recent buildings

developed in this location have demonstrated that typical development consists of a relatively small proportion of retail / commercial and a more significant proportion of residential. This mix drives a building form with a smaller podium (3 to 4 storeys) than that depicted in the proposed northern elevation. Depicting a smaller podium on the neighbouring site to the east, will essentially demonstrate that a scale more consistent with the three storey podium proposed on the subject site is developing along Rawson Street. However the north eastern corner of the podium still appears a little under scaled.

The configuration and massing of the north east corner of the building at podium level (level 4) is an important factor in presenting an appropriately scaled building to Rawson Street. It is a concern that the current proposal presents a slightly under scale podium to the street and does not maximise the level of amenity provided to units 1, 2, 3, 4 and 12. Unit 12 is orientated north, but looks directly into a blank wall screened with planting. Whilst the cabanas provided for units 1 and 2 are pushed back from the edge of the building, so as not to be read as part of the building form when viewed at street level.

It is suggested that unit 12 is reconfigured to face east and provided with a generous private court yard. More generously proportioned cabanas can be developed for units 1, 2, 3 and 4. The cabanas can extend to the northern boundary and be developed to contribute to the composition of the northern elevation, helping to increase the scale of the podium.

Scale / density

Both the scale and density of the proposal are generally consistent with the potential future character of the Wollongong city centre. However further refinement to the treatment of the Rawson street elevation is recommended (see context above).

Built form

Treatment of laneways as utilitarian spaces primarily used to service the building and providing vehicular access is an understandable response to this site. It is noted that a foot path has been provided and landscaping will be developed. However the extent and scale of the masonry walls presenting to the laneway could be bleak and oppressive. The applicant's suggestion to incorporate street art within this façade is encouraged. It is recommended that the street art be incorporated into the design of the wall / selection of materials.

Some development has been undertaken to wrap residential units, at podium level around the corners of the laneway. Blade walls have been developed with an eclectic composition of windows located within the blade walls. This has improved the edge treatment of the podium and the buildings relationship with the laneway. However it is suggested that further development / refinement of window

configuration be undertaken, to improve the quality of the internal spaces behind these windows.

The ground floor retail space has been configured to provide one large tenancy in the eastern portion of the site and several smaller tenancies in the western portion of the site fronting Railway Parade that are accessed directly from the street. An internal arcade has been created behind the Railway Parade retail tenancies. The arcade is also used as the residential entry and a service area for the retail tenancies fronting Railway Parade. As currently configured this space does not provide an appropriate or secure entrance for residents. It is suggested that the northern half of this foyer is dedicated to a residential entry and the southern half dedicated to the proposed retail. A secure door could be provided to link the residential foyer to the retail foyer.

The residential entry is clearly identifiable, however detail treatment depicted in drawing DA36-C appears to be impeding access into the residential foyer. Further development should seek to provide clear, level access from the street to the primary residential entrance.

Amenity

The relocation of the residential entry / vertical circulation core to the north west corner of the site has provided a shorter more rational access to level 2 / 3 units.

Diagrams provided demonstrate that in mid winter 3 hours solar access to in excess of 70% units can be provided, however this is dependent upon access being calculated between 8am and 4pm. The RFDC requires that 3 hours solar access be provided mid winter, between the hours of 9am and 3pm. There for the current proposal does not meet this minimum requirement. It is however noted that the proposal will comply with the newly adopted Apartment design Guide, which requires a minimum of two hours of solar access to living rooms and areas of private open space between 9am and 3pm mid winter.

The applicant previously explained the rational of the proposed orientation of each unit and potential for views in all directions. It is suggested that Councils K2Vi model is utilised to better understand potential views from each level of the tower to better inform, unit layouts, window placement and the form of the tower.

Aesthetic

The treatment of the podium base to the building has improved, however further development to the Rawson Street façade to incorporate the cabanas, will help to express a more appropriate scale to the street.

Consideration should be given to the configuration of windows within solid walls of the tower. The strategy to create patterns with windows in these walls, to add interest to the elevations is reasonable. However these patterns should primarily be

driven by a desire to maximise the quality of the internal space, the amenity (outlook, solar access) of apartments should not be compromised by the desire to create a pattern.

The roof form as proposed terminates abruptly and does not provide an appropriate termination to a tower such as this. It is suggested that a more simple form with a flatter roof and greater overhang is provided.

Social dimension

The proposed mixed use development will potentially provide an appropriate contribution to the city, pending further development.

Conclusion / Summary

Some fundamental developments with the design have been undertaken including the relocation of the tower, the increased height of the podium, the clearly defined entrance and stronger residential language of the podium. The panel views these amendments as positive developments, However further consideration / development of the following issues is recommended:

- The Rawson Street elevation should be developed to provide a more appropriate scale to the street and improve the amenity of units 1, 2, 3 and 12.
- Further detail development of the rear lane way.
- Further development / refinement of the residential entry.
- Consideration should also be given to the detail treatment of the tower façade and expression of roof form.