

9 March 2017

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cc

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Dear Robert,

DA-896/2015: Response to Heritage Officer (Strategic Planning Comments) Referral

311 HUME HIGHWAY, LIVERPOOL

We are in receipt of Liverpool City Council's referral dated 7th March 2017 in relation to DA-896/2015. In the letter, we note that a new heritage councillor on behalf of Liverpool City Council has added additional issues to those with which we have been steadily working over the last three years to achieve consensus on the proposal. The new heritage officer (Thomas Wheeler) has raised additional issues which have effectively distorted the process to date.

It needs to be noted that over the last three years, at least 10 meetings have been held with council at various points of the design. This included Pre-DA meetings, panel reviews and other less formal interactions that your company and associated consultants have had with the council. As the 7th March 2017 letter states, the planning was subject to a penultimate review which identified three main concerns:

- The heights of the towers should match to unify the gateway into the Liverpool City Centre (this is also reinforced by the comments of Councils former City Architect;
- The landscape treatment does not adequately respond to the heritage place (specifically the Inter-War style of the item) and support the lower floor treatment of the proposed tower;
- The materials and colour palette are modern and do not reference the dominant colours or materials of the heritage place. The proposal would be more sympathetic if a complementary materials and/or colour palette was employed.

Your design team and the rest of us have been steadily been working towards achieving mutual satisfaction with council in relation to the above three points. Yet, now the new heritage officer asserts that compliance with Council's requests has still not been achieved. The additional points raised are summarised as follows:

1. **Height, Bulk and Scale** – In relation to the height, bulk and scale, it must be noted that the proposed development is permissible under the current zoning of Liverpool. The current proposal is for three buildings as follows:
 - Building A - 9-storey rectangular block located to the north-west corner of the site;
 - Building B - 9-storey rectangular block located to the south-west corner of the site;
 - Building C - 33-storey tower located in the corner of Hoxton Park Road and Hume Highway, the height of the proposed development is permissible under the current zoning allocation.

The subject site neighbours the two-storey heritage building known as the Collingwood Inn Hotel. The juxtaposition of a 33-storey building in relation to a two-storey building will always bring up issues of bulk and scale as the relationship between the two entities is stark. However, the applicant need not be blamed for this peculiar juxtaposition. Under council's zoning designation, this type of juxtaposition would have been anticipated. It sets in motion a requirement for the diametrically opposed scales to somehow achieve a compatible relationship, but this is not always possible. The result and issue of bulk and scale is therefore born out of council's zoning designation and not the project itself. From this point of view, it must be noted that the applicant has already had 10 meetings with council over the last 3 years in an effort to ameliorate the disjunction of the two scales (heritage building and 33 storey tower).

It must be noted that gateway approval has already been obtained from the State Government for the development and the distribution of height for the three buildings has never previously been brought up in the three years proceeding council's 7th March 2017 letter. Additionally, I have checked with your office and have been informed that from an urban design perspective, re-distribution of the current height would not work.

2. **Landscape** – In regard to the landscaping, we believe the current scheme by Taylor Brammer does blend the two sites to soften the lower levels of the proposed development. Despite council's assertion that elements of the inter-wall garden style have not been sufficiently introduced as features in the landscaping design; on the contrary, we believe that it has. It is exemplified by the use of fan palm trees, Illawarra flame trees, blueberry ash and tallowwood trees. It must be noted that Taylor Brammer that is a highly-respected landscaping firm with significant experience on heritage sites. We completely support their scheme and judge it be an adequate unity of the two sites.
3. **Materials and Colours** – We disagree with the stance that the heritage officer at Liverpool council is taking in relation to the materials and colours it must noted that council's concerns regarding colours and materials has already been addressed and our company was involved in their process. Council now asserts that the proposal should seek to incorporate natural and earthy tones, the use of facebrick and timber within the material palette with particular emphasis on the lower levels. In our view this is not necessary as to emulate the half timbering of the faux Tudor building would

effectively result in the regurgitation of a regurgitated style given that the inter-war architecture of the heritage building is itself a reference to the old English style Tudor architecture of English country villages dating back to the 15th century, the introduction of timber and earthy tones would in our view be a pastiche and therefore - not necessary. The new buildings should reference the heritage building but in not such a deliberate fashion as required by council.

Conclusion

In reference to the above comments, we believe the applicant has resolved the three issues discussed above i.e.;

- Materials and Colours,
- Landscaping and
- Building Height unification.

In our opinion, there is now no necessity to amend the design on the basis of council's concerns iterated above.

Yours sincerely,



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CEO

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