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Nominated Architect Peter Poulet ARN 5754

Mr Murray Blackburn-Smith  
Manager, Development and Building  
Newcastle City Council

## **470 KING STREET, NEWCASTLE – DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2016**

Panel members: Olivia Hyde, Philip Pollard, Professor Peter Webber  
For Applicant: Stuart Campbell (CKDS Architects), Philip Thalís (Hill Thalís), Jane Irwin (Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture), Warwick Miller

### **Background Summary**

This report is based upon assessment of the following Development Application drawings:-  
Architectural Drawings by Hill Thalís & CKDS Architecture

DA-001-113,  
DA 210-205,  
DA 301-306,  
DA 401-403,  
DA501-507,  
& photo-montage views

Landscape Drawings by Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture  
L101-102 & L200-201

SEPP 65 Design Quality Statement by Hill Thalís & CKDS Architecture

No Statement of Environmental Effects was available to the Panel

The DA submission was essentially consistent with the preferred option presented at Pre-DA design stage and supported in principle by the Panel in October 2015. It was noted that the DA had also been assessed by the Newcastle City Council Urban Design Consultative Group on 20th April 2016 and a copy of that panel's report was available.

It is considered that the application is of good quality and is supported subject to a range of detailed issues being addressed as discussed below under the ten headings of the Apartment Design Guide.

### **1. Context and Neighbourhood Character**

The key issues and planning controls were summarized in the October 2015 pre-DA report and are not repeated. It is considered that the design as developed successfully addresses its context and the evolving character of the immediate area of Newcastle. It would establish an urbane precedent in relation to the King Street frontage, and very attractively activate the presently desolate frontage to Cottage Creek.

The applicant advised that negotiations are well under way to include the small 'left-over' triangular plot on the King Street-Cottage Creek corner into the development. This is highly desirable and presumably will be dealt with by way of S.96 amendment or other means.

The montage views provided in the submission do not include eye-level images and other approved or completed developments which give a realistic impression of the appearance of the development in the streetscape, -as would be typically seen from a block or so away from various directions. It is highly desirable for these to be provided, indicating also the potential profiles of future new buildings which would appear from these vantage points.

## **2. Built Form and Scale**

The configuration of the building forms is essentially unchanged, with the two towers, the 5-storey King Street podium with recessed floor above, and the internal landscaped courtyard over the carpark three levels above ground. Three issues which were raised have been satisfactorily resolved:-

- The height of the podium at the street frontage is a little above the 16 metre planning control but is acceptable in view of the width of King Street and there being no consequential adverse impacts.
- The awning along King Street is now continuous and would provide cover and shelter for its full length, and around into the eastern colonnade of the southern tower.
- The main King Street façade of the southern tower remains on the boundary, which is considered to be acceptable given the relatively small size of the tower, the continuous street awning, and the skilful articulation linking the tower and podium.
- The challenge of dealing with the interface of the footpath and the raised ground-floor retail/commercial areas due to flood levels has been addressed by providing steps internally which results in a more attractive street frontage.

## **3. Density**

Remains complying and acceptable

## **4. Sustainability**

The following comment in the April UDCG report is fully supported:-

*"Given the large scale of the development the inclusion of major environmental initiatives such as solar energy collection, waste water recycling etc. is strongly recommended."*

## **5. Landscape**

The proposal to establish bays with large trees and undercover 'rain-garden' planting along the King Street frontage appears to be an excellent initiative: this would allow for adequate canopy spread assist in treating rainwater run-off into Cottage Creek, and is stated to not result in loss of kerbside parking. It will require consultation with and support by Council.

The landscape design was considered to be of a high standard, and suggested changes are by way of further design refinements.

These suggestions include the provision of some seating in the residents' landscaped area at ground level facing Cottage Creek. There is an opportunity to utilise the wide walkway that provides residents' access to the northern tower, to provide some informal meeting/seating areas for residents, some of which could be under shelter. There also is an opportunity to provide some landscape inclusions at the northern end of the podium landscaped area that will serve as play stimulation for smaller children. These may include imagination-stimulating sculptural structures such as a beached boat, or vehicle (train, truck), that children can safely climb into and onto. A small sandpit can be included in this design, which would be an ancillary to, and in sight of, the adults barbecue/ shaded area.

Maintain low level fences / planting between podium level apartment private open space and the communal garden area to ensure outlook and a sense of communal ownership is retained. Maintain direct access (via gates as currently indicated) between the Private open spaces and the communal open space.

## **6. Amenity**

The quality of residential flats would be of very good standard, more than satisfying the recommendations of the Apartment Design Guide. The issue raised at pre-DA stage of privacy in bedrooms in the tower blocks facing each other has been well resolved by way of screening and orientation. The access corridors in the tower blocks would have excellent daylight and outlook. The podium courtyard would also provide a very pleasant environment and attractive outlook for residents.

The following detailed matters should be addressed:-

- Seating at end(s) of tower block corridors
- Back of house facilities for commercial/retail spaces, and provision for café/restaurant fitout
- Explore options for natural light/ventilation to car parking, at least at topmost level
- Balconies in the tower blocks will be extremely exposed to winds: the Panel was not provided with the wind report and is not convinced that there would be adequate protection to ensure the habitability of many in various wind conditions. This will have a negative impact on the amenity and of the apartments. Further detailed study of wind impacts is required through subsequent design stages.
- Balconies along the King Street frontage will be exposed to constant road noise, headlight glare etc: consider acoustic treatment to balcony soffits and other measures.
- Support double glazing to lower level residential apartments facing King Street.
- Communal spaces/facilities require development as discussed under Clause 8 below.

## **7. Safety**

Satisfactory, on the assumption that there will be security gates at the King Street entrance to provide 'after hours' safety along the Cottage Creek pedestrian area. If in future this is extended through to Hunter Street gates may not be needed.

## **8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction**

In a development containing 197 residential flats there are likely to be 400-500 residents ranging from the very young to the very old, and very probably with an increasing number of young children. The unit mix as proposed is satisfactory, but the following communal facilities should be included:-

- Toddlers play space in the podium landscaped area
- An enclosed and welcoming space located in the access way between the two tower entrance lobbies where residents in those blocks would meet, greet visitors etc. This would have attractive outlook to the east and Cottage Creek. Tea-making facilities, sink/urn seating etc. should be provided. With inclusion of this amenity, provision of a communal space in each tower block as previously recommended would not be needed.
- The 'Community Space' shown at Level 3 in the podium block should be moved to a more appropriate location, desirably with outlook over the courtyard and access to winter sunlight, to serve as a facility for the residents of this block.

## **9. Aesthetics**

The general character and architectural expression is fully supported. In relation to external materials and finishes it is recommended that there should be some warmth in the colours and tones which empathise with traditional Newcastle ambience, rather than the somewhat cool in tone in the appearance suggested by the montage views. The podium at the side and rear boundaries will be a substantial structure, which is likely to remain visible for an extended period until future development abuts it. It was suggested that the appearance of this needed to be further considered. The possibility of plain blockwork being regularly graffitied was also a concern. Means of dealing with this include the addition or inclusion of artwork - possibly associated with deeply embossed pre-cast patterning, or painted murals / street art, or the inclusion of robust plants such as climbing fig.

## **Amendments Required to Achieve Design Quality**

The application is already for a development of good quality, but this should be enhanced by positive response to the detailed but important issues raised above under clauses 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9

**Summary Recommendation**

The application is supported subject to the above issues being resolved

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olivia Hyde'.

Olivia Hyde  
Director of Design Excellence

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016