

13 October 2017

Attention: Maurice Beraldo
BD Architecture Interiors
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Via email: maurice@bdai.com.au

Re: Peer review of the façade composition for 34-44 Hill Street, Gosford

GM Urban Design & Architecture (GMU) has been engaged by BD Architecture Interiors to undertake an independent peer review of the building façade design for the development proposal located at Nos. 34-44 Hill Street, Gosford, to promote higher levels of design excellence in the external expression of the elevations.

To undertake the assessment, GMU has reviewed the revised DA drawings dated 10/10/17, Gosford LEP and DCP controls, and we have also conducted desktop research to understand the site's context and the existing streetscape character. GMU has provided on-going advice to the architects and collaborated internally with the design team to achieve a number of amendments to the elevations.

Façade composition and materials

The revised built form provides a scale transition cascading down from 9 storeys (north) to 7 storeys (south). It presents a sympathetic response to the immediate context of the site along Hills Street which is likely to be up to 9 storeys to the north and 5-7 storeys to the south.

The revised building envelope comprises of 3 distinct components for both Building A (9 storeys) and Building B (7 storeys) – base, recessed waist and top. Each component has a slightly different architectural treatment to create architectural interest and variation but they come together in a complementary way. The 3-storey podium is clearly defined by utilising off-form frames and a recessed 'waist' level (2m setback on each side from the upper-level building line) between the upper and lower levels. This creates an appropriate separation and shadow line between the base and the upper levels (see Figure 1 and 2). Building A shows a well-proportioned scale of 2:1 between the upper and base levels. Building B presents an even proportion between the podium and upper levels on the elevation drawing; however, from a streetscape point of view, Building B exhibits an appropriate scale and proportion relative to the streetscape when viewed from a pedestrian point of view (see Figure 3) and therefore the proposed proportion and transition in scale are considered acceptable.



Figure 1. DA202 East Elevation – Hill Street, Rev. A, dated 10/10/17 (source: BD Architecture Interiors)



Figure 2. DA203 South Elevation (left) and DA201 North Elevation (right), Rev. A, dated 10/10/17 (source: BD Architecture Interiors)

It is GMU's opinion that the revised building façade design presents a more cohesive and balanced solution than that exhibited in previous iterations (DA drawings dated 14/3/16) in terms of façade composition, particularly at the street elevation (Hill Street) and side elevations. The following design measures incorporated in the proposal contribute to reducing perceived building depth and bulk as well as provide an appropriate level of visual interest along the street:

- A combined modulation of the façade including recessed vertical articulation on all facades, reducing the perceived depth and bulk of the buildings as well as balance the horizontal and vertical elements.
- The framed building corners in contrast with open balconies adding visual interest.
- The articulated roof expression by utilising higher and lower parapet design helps to break up the proposed volume as well as reduce the perceived bulk.
- The 3D render provided as part of the DA application (Figure 3) shows extruding window frames on the proposed brick wall façade of Building A, which provide shallow shadow changes on the facade. This adds an additional level of visual interest to the facade.
- Use of the recessed balcony slabs to create further façade articulation to the street front, forming a varying rhythm to the streetscape.
- A selection of contemporary materials and neutral colours to the facades, providing a variation and contrast between textures and finishes across the built form. The materials in use are cemented barestone to the podium level balconies over the residential entries and off-form podium frames, render and painted finish (white) to the upper-level facades, face brick (dark grey) to the southern part of Building A and metal cladding black stain to the extruded window frame.
- The use of large glazing to the residential entries and ground floor common rooms (gym and swimming pool facilities), providing passive surveillance to the public domain.

GMU recommend the use of the vertical green wall to the rear ground level blank wall façade to soften the hard edge to the communal open space, mitigating any potential visual impacts.



Figure 3. Comparative view of previously proposed DA scheme, dated 14/3/16 (top) and the current revised proposal, dated 10/10/17 (bottom) when viewed from Hill Street (source: BD Architecture Interiors)

The revised proposal has encapsulated the vehicle access points within the building envelope and from side boundaries. It provides a continuous pedestrian footpath of up to 44m with an improved level of passive surveillance generated by the proposed gym, pool facilities and legible residential entries on the ground level.



Figure 4. DA102 Ground Floor and Landscape Plan (source: BD Architecture Interiors)