

## **21-25 Woodriff Street Penrith DA16/1083 - amended**

### **Scope**

- 1 This report provides an opinion regarding proposed amendments to the original development consent, and whether those amendments demonstrate design excellence.
- 2 This report has relied upon the following documents:
  - i Proposed amendments to DA 16/1083 (*the proposed modification*):
    - Architectural plans by Morson Group:  
DA01 to DA 29, versions A to E dated to 27 August 2018
    - Landscape plans by Conzept Landscape Architects:  
DA 16-505 1 to 3, versions B to G dated to 21 August 2018
  - ii Design excellence waiver:
    - NSW Government Architect's Office (GAO), dated 5 December 2016
  - iii The applicable design controls and guidelines:
    - *SEPP No 65*, and the *Apartment Design Guide*
    - *Penrith LEP 2010*, specifically clause 8.4 Design excellence

### **Background**

- 3 The proposed modification represents the sixth set of plans which has been prepared for this site by architects Morson Group:
  - i As a member of Penrith City's *Urban Design Review Panel*, I have provided design quality reviews for all six of those development concepts and applications.
  - ii The original concept and DA proposed a number of positive design features for a site which is rather unique and, on that basis, I supported the applicant's request in 2016 for a design competition waiver.
  - iii However, following the GAO's granting of a design competition waiver in December 2016, subsequent iterations of the original concept demonstrated lesser standards of design quality:
    - In part, those iterations were driven by amendment of the site's configuration which occurred during negotiations with the Council's property division.
    - In order to reinstate design quality of the original concept, my reports to the Council have recommended detailed amendments.

## **Design quality and excellence**

- 4 The proposed modification demonstrates a degree of design excellence which exceeds quality of the original concept and the development proposal dated September 2016 which received the GAO's design competition waiver in December 2016:
  - i 'Sculpted' articulation of building forms together with architecturally-refined compositions of facades would provide visually-superior backdrops to the CBD skyline as well as to surrounding public places.
  - ii Street and laneway frontages provide superior-quality public spaces which respond positively to the amenity and character of Memory Park and Woodriff Street next to the roundabout intersection with Tindale Street.
  - iii Back-of-house service areas have been consolidated and provide a less-intrusive backdrop to the eastern end of Union Lane which operates as a 'shareway'.
  - iv Communal areas have been refined and provide more-effective backdrops which overlook surrounding streets and parks, and which display visible activity.
  - v Proposed landscaping responds to the formal qualities of Memory Park as well as to the informal character of existing tree-plantings in Judges Park.
  - vii Sustainability has been addressed by additional design details which include balcony screens and podium-level landscaping.
  - viii Architectural documentation demonstrates how features of the proposed modification would contribute to design excellence.
- 5 With regard to considerations in relation to design excellence which are specified by subclause 8.4(2) of PLEP 2010:
  - i A high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location would be achieved:
    - Plans include detailed sections together with finishes schedules which confirm the diversity and quality of proposed exterior materials and finishes.
  - ii Form and external appearance of the development would improve the quality and amenity of the public domain:
    - A well-articulated building form together with carefully-composed facades respond positively to 'visibility in the round';
    - In particular example, the north-eastern corner of the building provides a 'sculpted' backdrop to Memory Park, and an architecturally-dramatic façade which would be visible from the intersection of High and Woodriff Streets (the primary vantage points from which this building would be seen).

- iii The development would not detrimentally impact any view corridor:
  - The building would be located at the end of Tindale Street, but the existing council carpark to the west of the Site blocks scenic vistas along that street toward the lower mountains.
- iv The development responds to streetscape constraints which include the heritage-listed Memory Park:
  - The proposed building form has a Y-shape which responds to the Site's irregular geometry, and comprises two narrow intersecting wings which inherently-moderate the building's mass and scale;
  - At street level, the form of the building 'flows' along the eastern boundary as well as providing an indented forecourt and entrance opposite Memory Park;
  - Landscape treatment of the Site's frontages provide green backdrops to Woodriff Street and forecourt which complements Memory Park.
- v Form of the development demonstrates a positive relationship with other buildings (existing or future):
  - The proposed development is surrounded by two storey buildings, and neighbouring properties currently have potential to accommodate seven storey buildings;
  - In relation to future development, the proposed height is one storey taller but, due to effective articulation, that difference would not be apparent;
  - In relation to existing neighbours, effective articulation of the proposed building form moderates scale and avoids a bulky appearance;
  - For example, scale of the visually-prominent Woodriff Street façade would be moderated significantly by the proposed podium together with splayed and stepped wall-and-balcony elements which present heights of six and seven storeys, and which stand forward of the 'penthouse' element which comprises one-to-two storeys.
- vi The building form demonstrates appropriate bulk, massing and modulation:
  - Details of articulation and modulation were described in sub-paragraphs i, ii and v above;
  - Due to effective articulation, the proposed building form would not display a bulky appearance, and would provide appropriate backdrops to surrounding public places.
- vii Street frontage heights are appropriate:
  - Foreground elements of elevations that face Woodriff Street and Union Lane vary in overall height from five to six storeys, but overall heights are moderated by tiers of balconies which represent the dominant architectural elements of these elevations and which have heights of four or five storeys;

- Proposed street frontage heights are taller than the 20m control which is specified by chapter E11 of PDCP 2014, but this numeric non-conformity would not be inherently-inappropriate: the Site is an 'island' which would be visually-separated from future redevelopment of neighbouring properties and, due to the combination of separation and highly-effective articulation, the proposed street frontage heights would not present unacceptable contrasts with the form of numerically-conforming developments that might occur nearby.
- viii Form and design demonstrate appropriate consideration of sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity:
- The proposed building form would not overshadow any significant public places that provide CBD focal points;
  - Extensive glazed elements are protected by screened balconies, and facades do not incorporate finishes which are highly-reflective;
  - Effective control of summer sunlight into the proposed building would be achieved by screening of extensive window elements, together with taller landscaping which is proposed along the eastern street frontage and upon the west-facing podium.
- ix Principles of ecologically sustainable development are achieved:
- Design responses to principles of ESD were noted in sub-paragraph viii above.
- x The development responds positively to requirements for pedestrians, vehicles and service access:
- The proposed development has successfully accommodated complicated requirements for vehicle access to the Site and the neighbouring carpark, as well as providing appropriate ground level interfaces to Woodriff Street and Union Lane;
  - Due to the effective arrangement of access for vehicles and servicing, street frontages have not been visually-dominated by back-of-house services or driveways;
  - Form and design of the 'porte-cochere' vehicle entrance provides a high-quality semi-public space (rather than a utilitarian 'back door');
  - Due to a highly-effective ground floor layout, pedestrian pathways from surrounding arcades, footpaths and parks have been woven 'seamlessly' into the proposed development.
- xi The development includes positive improvements to the public domain:
- Positive public domain improvements were noted by sub-paragraphs iv and x in relation to frontages facing Woodriff Street and Union Lane, and to the public carpark entry.

- 6 In conclusion, I consider that the modified proposal:
- i Demonstrates design excellence according to considerations which are specified by sub-clause 8.4 of *PLEP 2010*.
  - ii Exceeds the level of quality which was achieved by plans dated September 2016 which were the subject of a design competition waiver that was granted by the GAO.
  - iii Meets requirements that were specified by the GAO's design competition waiver dated December 2016.



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