
Design Excellence Panel Minutes

To: Jai Shankar - Assessment Planner

Application No: DA2020/0246

Property: 93 St Hilliers Rd. Auburn

Proposal: Part demolition of existing structures, subdivision into 2 lots and construction of an 8 storey hotel development comprising accommodation, conference and function areas, semi-basement parking and associated services.

Meeting Date: 5th August 2020

Panel Members: Jon Johannsen (Chair)
David Appleby
Marc Deuschle

Attendance: Council:
Jai Shankar
Michael Lawani
Rennie Rounds
Esra Calim
Rashika Rani

Applicant:
Adam Coburn, Mecone
David Zhao, T1 Constructions
Xin Pan, T1 Constructions
Addison Boykin, Mecone
Jun Sakaguchi, Jackson Teece
Courtney Ryan, Jackson Teece

Background:

This is the first time this DA 2020/0426 has been reviewed by the Design Excellence Panel (DEP). All members of the DEP inspected the site prior to the meeting and have reviewed current documentation supplied through the Cumberland City Council (CCC) by the Applicant.

As per the CCC Planning Report:

Mecone, on behalf of the Applicant, is seeking consent for the *partial demolition of existing structures, subdivision into two (2) lots, and construction of an 8 storey hotel over a semi-basement car parking level and associated signage* at 93 St Hilliers Road, Auburn.

The site is zoned B6 Enterprise Corridor, pursuant to the provisions of the Auburn Local Environmental Plan 2010 (ALEP 2010). Development for the purpose of 'hotel or motel accommodation' is permitted with consent in the B6 Enterprise Corridor land use zone. The site is located in the vicinity of a State Heritage Register listed item – 'Electricity Substation No 167' which is located at 93 Parramatta Road, Auburn, which is situated on the northern side of Parramatta Road, along its intersection with Silverwater Road.



Locality & Aerial Perspective – subject site in red outline with area of proposed building shaded red and location of State heritage listed item denoted by purple star (Source: Nearmap, 2020)

Key issues identified by CCC:

Height exceedance being greater than permissible 27m, with 2.96m additional height over part of the built form relative to the existing site contours.

Recommendation:

The Panel is satisfied that the key issues have been adequately addressed and, along with recommendations made on further minor amendments, could be dealt with as Conditions of Approval by Council's assessment officer:

1. The Panel was appreciative of the site analysis provided but questioned whether there should be some consideration of the possible future development on the part of the site to the south as part of an overall master plan appraisal. The Applicant advised that overall site master planning had been undertaken - this should be made available to Council for consideration. The proposed long term redevelopment of the adjoining properties to the southwest of the hotel development are important in understanding the future context for the hotel; in assessing building-to-building separation, potential overshadowing of future

private open space/courtyard spaces and in addressing issues of proximity. Parts of the proposed building about the southwest boundary with zero setback. This raises issues of fire safety, security and constructability for hotel rooms, balconies and access stairs (reference is made to DA-650). The long term configuration of the Level 1 courtyard along the southwest boundary should be considered.

2. The Panel understood that, with the partial retention of the existing building form fronting Parramatta Road and the basement car parking below, this created some constraints for the design of the new basement and building above. Nevertheless, the Panel expressed concern about:
 - Potential for more articulation to the existing façade, with possible inclusion of breakout terraces and balconies to dining and function spaces that could also incorporate sun shading benefits.
 - The new sandstone cladding proposed could also be extended across the front of Level 1 rooms over the entry and with inclusion of a curved pergola structure would improve the interface between existing and new built forms.
 - The relationship of the wide car park entry to the hotel porte cochère and foyer could be improved with further resolution of the interface between the building elements and landscape. Scope for the pergola (as noted above) to extend across the face of the lounge and café bar area could be considered to soften this large void area.
 - The Panel also felt that open parking directly in front of the main hotel entry was visually detrimental and would prefer these spaces were relocated.
 - The Parramatta Road – Percy Street corner is expressed as the signature viewpoint for the hotel. The Parramatta Road – St Hilliers Road intersection, being a major corner in the urban fabric, also requires due consideration in Architectural expression. Whilst the podium (sandstone) levels address the corner well, the tower portion lacks conviction and the emphasis warranted by this prime corner location.
 - DA-551 indicates a small commercial function at Ground Floor at the Parramatta Road – St Hilliers Road corner, whilst other plans (DA-100) indicate a hotel foyer function. The function, access and address to this corner needs to be clarified in subsequent submissions to Council.
3. The Panel felt that while retention of the significant mature trees on Parramatta Road was to be commended, there was still further potential for this landscape frontage to enhance the public realm between Percy St and St Hilliers Rd. It was recommended that there be more investigation of ways to improve the interface between private and public open spaces, with complementary landscaping treatment to deal with environmental impacts and assist street activation through breakout terraces and balconies noted above. The Panel noted that recent strategic plans for the upgrade of the Parramatta Road corridor through the Auburn Precinct (PRUTS) suggest a more urban streetscape response was appropriate (rather than the current suburban approach with narrow concrete path, nature strip, etc.). Redundant footpaths on the site should be removed and the public footpaths widened and reconnected at the Parramatta Road - St Hilliers Road corner.
4. As part of the landscape strategy, incorporation of some public art should be considered to enhance the streetscape through visual interest and storytelling around this very prominent intersection.
5. It was noted that the internal courtyard was a major landscape design feature of the hotel, and the Panel felt there may be a missed opportunity for some visual connection through from the function and dining areas at the front, and potentially for the guest lifts to overlook/experience the space.

6. At the rear, the Panel also recommended a review of the lost potential to create a reasonable deep soil zone for mature trees to be planted in the space between hotel rooms and the adjacent warehouse. Some replanning of basement BOH areas and car parking below would appear possible to allow this.
7. Sustainable design initiatives such as the scope for natural ventilation of the atrium void were appreciated. However, inclusion of p/v solar panels on the roof could also be considered to provide power to common areas, and the Panel also questioned whether the solar load from large glazed areas to north facing hotel rooms might be better treated with external shading rather than performance glass.
8. Any future landscape plans must show the relevant architectural floor plans to allow a clear understanding of the internal/external interfaces and the landscape and architectural designs must be fully coordinated. Currently discrepancies between the two mean it is unclear which design is the final intended outcome.
9. The Panel acknowledges that the retention of the existing landscape is mainly intended to buffer the hotel from Parramatta Road but opportunities should be explored where the landscape can benefit the hotel, particularly via views out from the internal spaces. More thought and resolution of the design needs to be provided. Further to this, the retention of the pathway appears to not complement the new design/function and should be revised.

For the decision: Jon Johannsen, David Appleby, Marc Deuschle

Against the decision: None

Considerations:

Considerations	Comments
Whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved.	The Panel appreciated that this development had potential for the requisite design excellence with recommended minor changes to the façade of the existing front building to be retained, and a more considered integration at the interface with the new building and the entry off Percy Street.
Whether the form and external appearance of the development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain.	With minor amendments recommended above the Panel considers that the development should be a positive improvement to both the quality and amenity of the Parramatta Rd corridor.
Whether the development detrimentally impacts on view corridors.	No obvious impacts but the Panel did observe that the view of the proposal from the corner of Parramatta Rd and St Hilliers Rd had scope for improvement as noted above.
How the development addresses the following matters:	
The suitability of the land for development;	Land is suitable.
Existing and proposed uses and use mix;	Appropriate.

Heritage issues and streetscape constraints;	There are no heritage impacts and the development can adequately address the streetscape character with Conditions of Consent to cover minor amendments suggested.
The location of any tower proposed, having regard to the need to achieve an acceptable relationship with other towers (existing or proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form;	Due consideration should be given to the future urban form of this precinct, and while the current industrial building adjacent is to be retained, there should be some indication of potential future development on the adjacent subdivision. The Panel considers the proposal acceptable with the relatively minor exceedance of height control being sought, and this should be supported given the urban context and related site conditions, as per the CI.4.6 variation.
Bulk, massing and modulation of buildings;	With minor refinement of the built form as per above recommendations, the bulk, massing and modulation is considered acceptable.
Street frontage heights;	The additional height of 2.96m sought over part of the built form is considered reasonable and would have minimal impacts.
Environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity;	Minor amendments recommended as per comments above.
The achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development;	Minor amendments recommended as per comments above.
Pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access and circulation requirements; and	Minor amendments recommended as per comments above.
The impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain.	Minor amendments recommended as per comments above.

Signature



Jon Johannsen
Chairperson