

Wollongong Design Review Panel – MS Teams Meeting
Meeting minutes and recommendations

Date	16 May 2022
Meeting location	Wollongong City Council Administration Offices
Panel members	(Chair) David Jarvis (Member) Tony Quinn (Member) Sue Hobley
Apologies	none
Council staff	Pier Panozzo – City Centre & Major Development Manager Brad Harris - Senior Development Project Officer
Guests/ representatives of the applicant	Angelo Di Martino – ADM Architects Elaine Treglown - Cardno Russell Lee
Declarations of Interest	None
Item number	1
DA number	DA-2021/1168
Reason for consideration by DRP	Design Excellence Clause 7.18, WLEP 2009
Determination pathway	SRPP
Property address	72-76 Crown Street, Wollongong
Proposal	Demolition of two (2) existing structures, construction of a new nine (9) storey office building with four (4) levels of basement parking adaptive reuse of existing heritage building – amended plans
Applicant or applicant's representative address to the design review panel	The meeting was conducted by video link between the panel (Council offices) and the applicant's team (Remote)
Background	The Panel have previously visited the site and provided commentary at the DRP meeting of 6 December 2021.
Design quality principals SEPP 65	
Context and Neighbourhood Character	<p>The proposal is located within the commercial core of Wollongong city centre.</p> <p>A two-storey heritage-listed building is located in the south-east corner of the site, fronting Crown Street and Moore Lane. The neighbouring site on the eastern side of Moore Lane is also a two-storey heritage-listed building that fronts Crown Street.</p> <p>The north and western boundaries of the site are adjoined by a site owned by the NSW state government. The site contains office buildings with three-storey high, blank concrete walls adjoining the subject site.</p> <p>A built-form study has been provided by the applicant (drawing A-003) documenting the proposal in its likely future context. The diagram shows all sites located between the subject site and Corrimal Street being maintained as two storey buildings fronting Crown Street. Taller tower forms realising the full extent of Council's development controls are shown on adjoining sites, setback back from Crown Street. Given the lot configuration, heritage context and Council's requirement for a 10m set back (above street wall height) on Crown Street, this is considered to be a fair assessment of the future context. It is reasonable to assume that Crown Street will maintain a two-storey scale between Moore Lane and Corrimal Street.</p> <p>The revised proposal responds appropriately to this context by forming a two-storey street wall that adjoins the heritage building and setting back the tower form 10m from Crown Street.</p>

	<p>Drawing A004a expands upon the contextual study by showing potential building separation achieved between neighbouring buildings fronting Crown Street. The study shows that the lane and the neighbouring heritage building creates greater potential for building separation to the east of the subject site. Whilst the comparatively narrow proportions of the site to the west allows less potential for building separation.</p>
Built Form and Scale	<p><u>Building base</u></p> <p>The commercial building responds appropriately to the immediate context of the site with a three-storey base that abuts the site's northern and western boundaries, providing a direct connection to the blank walls of the neighbouring building (NSW Government offices). A nil set back has also been provided to Moore Lane at levels 1 and 2 forming a clearly defined base to the building.</p> <p><u>Moore Lane interface</u></p> <p>Moore Lane is a 5.5m wide carriage way that appears to be dedicated to vehicular access and servicing. The applicant advised that a development application for a building to the north-east of the site has been submitted and includes the option to extend Moore Lane to the north and additionally create a new east-west link to cross it and provide access to the properties to the north and north-east of the site. This would enable Moore Lane and the new crosslink to provide vehicular access to the rear or sides of all the properties with frontages to them, including the site. The proposal for vehicular access has been designed to improve the Crown Street frontage by taking advantage of the opening of Moore Lane to the north and closing off the vehicular access to Crown Street should that happen. The Panel commends this flexible approach to vehicular access and circulation, and ground floor use.</p> <p>The proposal is to provide a 3m setback to Moore Lane at street level and activate the lane with a small shop and commercial entry. In principle, activating the laneway is supported by the Panel. However, this must be done in conjunction with a broader study of the laneway / public domain to ensure a safe, amenable environment can be provided to pedestrians. To improve the viability of the shop it is also recommended that the design be developed to provide a more positive connection between the shop and the commercial foyer (refer to amenity for further detail).</p> <p><u>Alignment of tower</u></p> <p>Council's controls require a minimum setback of 4m from the laneway above street wall height. The upper levels of the commercial tower provide a setback of 2.4m. Given the scale of the base of the building addressing the lane (11m) it appears that the spatial quality of the lane would not be impacted by further reducing the set back of the tower above level 3, to 1m. This would allow the commercial tower to be set back 6m from the western boundary. It is also noted that this configuration could accommodate building separation in excess of 12m from future towers to the east. In broad terms, by relocating the tower (above level 3) 1.5m further east a better spatial relationship can be achieved between future tower forms.</p> <p><u>Heritage structure</u></p> <p>The revised proposal maintains and restores the entirety of the heritage structure. Forming a gallery around the northern and western facades of the building, allowing the existing building to be viewed from with the foyer of the commercial building. This is</p>

	<p>potentially a commendable strategy that will contribute to the character of the commercial building.</p> <p>At this stage no internal layouts have been provided for the heritage building (the applicant advised that a tenant is yet to be secured for this space). Developing an internal layout that provides a strong connection with the foyer of the commercial building will help to solidify the heritage struct as an integral part of the design. The introduction of some strategically located opening/s in the northern and western walls of the heritage structure will assist in developing a cohesive design response.</p> <p><u>Crown Street interface</u></p> <p>In response to the Panel's previous comments, the proposal has been developed to continue the two-storey street wall fronting Crown Street and the tower has been setback to 10m from the street. The form of the proposal now relates appropriately to the street. However, further development of the expression to the two-storey street wall is recommended (refer to amenity for detail).</p> <p><u>Height</u></p> <p>The proposed plant room is approximately 2m in excess of the maximum permissible height (32m). However, it is noted that the plant room is setback significantly from the street. The plant room will not increase the perceived height of the building or significantly impact over shadowing of the public domain.</p>
Density	<p>Further refinement to the positioning of the tower is recommended to ensure the proposal does not present as an over-development of the site.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The proposal's commitment to a 4-star NABERS rating is reasonable. However, the applicant is encouraged to aim higher to achieve the design excellence criteria by committing to a 5- or 6-star building.</p>
Landscape	<p><u>Crown Street</u></p> <p>The amended design has responded well to the Panel's previous concerns with regard to the Crown Street frontage. Concerns are raised, however, about (i) the proposed planters on either side of Moore Lane at the intersection with Crown Street and (ii) proposed street trees.</p> <p>Concerns with the proposed planters are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one is not on the applicant's property - both are to be located adjacent to, and on the southern side of, heritage items on their Crown Street frontages - they affect the straightforward use of the public pedestrian way (requiring pedestrians to use the street tree blister elements) - the one on the site will be beneath an awning <p>Council's traffic engineer, landscape and heritage officers should be asked to comment on this part of the proposal.</p> <p>The proposed street tree planting should be discussed with Council. Establishing useful amenity trees on the southern side of tall buildings is problematic horticulturally and, additionally, requires consideration of such factors as</p>

	<p>underground utilities, sightlines, awning design, pedestrian access, building entrances and suitable species. It is noted that the existing street tree (accommodated in the blister to the public footpath) is a palm that offers little in terms of amenity or environmental benefits.</p> <p>The proposed revolving door at the main entrance to the building, adjacent to the south-west corner of the heritage item is questioned in terms of its impact on viewing of the heritage item from the street and its optimality with regard to universal access.</p> <p><u>Moore Lane</u></p> <p>The Moore Lane frontage is functional for pedestrians and vehicles. Its amenity will depend on the materials and finishes used in its final execution.</p> <p>The following points are raised for consideration by the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The configuration of the entry, shop 2 and the accessible WC should be revisited to establish better relationships between shop 2, the WC and the foyer. (Refer to detail comments below amenity) - it is noted that the architectural and landscape plan are inconsistent in relation to shop 2's entries - If Moore Lane is opened up as a pedestrian and vehicular link in the future, the proposed siting of the substation and the wall extension in the north-eastern corner are poor design elements. <p><u>Terrace Levels</u></p> <p>In general, the Panel considers the proposal to be a sound response to the urban context and orientation of the site.</p> <p>The following points require further consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is noted that, if the tower is repositioned to the east, a larger terrace will be accommodated on levels 3 and 4. This may merit a design response that is not simply a widening of the paved area of each terrace. - Tree plantings on levels 1 and 2 could be better located to improve solar and daylight access (particularly in winter) without necessarily causing unacceptable solar exposure in summer - Insetting the western planter on the level 1 terrace may preclude the need for a safety rail but it reduces the available functional space. Alternative shapes and layouts should be explored that improve functionality and amenity (the planter need not necessarily be a rectangle) - The long, linear space on level 4 along the northern frontage will lack good amenity. Options to break it up into smaller, more interesting spaces with horticulturally feasible plantings should be explored. If more doors opened from the office space into this area, it could support 'garden rooms' for small coffee meetings or the like. Tropical trees and vines may be feasible to support this approach.
Amenity	<p>The proposal marginally exceeds Council's maximum floor plate (1200sqm on some levels) and building depth (25m) provisions. However, it is acknowledged that the form of the building responds</p>

	<p>to immediate context of the site in an appropriate manner to provide reasonable level of amenity.</p> <p>The Panel suggests that the retail facing Moore Lane should also better integrated into the building foyer. The wc should be located behind the (to the north) of the shop 2, to allow the shop to connect to the foyer with the north/south and east/west walls facing the lobby being glazed and openable to the foyer. A more discrete entry should be provided to the Accessible WC. Consideration should also be given to the relationship of columns with the entry, when developing the layout of this space.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the typology of door provided to the entry foyer from Crown Street. The currently proposed revolving door may be difficult for wheelchairs / push chair and the elderly to negotiate. Equitable access to the primary street frontage must be provided.</p> <p>The amenity of the Moore Lane walkway will depend on the materials and finishes proposed; they should be of a high quality.</p> <p>See Landscape for comments relating to the level 4 northern terrace.</p>
Safety	Potential vehicular and pedestrian conflicts need to be managed along Crown Street and within the laneway.
Housing Diversity and Social Interaction	The commercial office development would provide an appropriate contribution to this precinct.
Aesthetics	<p>Further development of the expression of the two-storey street wall fronting Crown Street is recommended. The scale and proportion of the heritage structure should better inform the expression of this façade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a clearly defined junction between the heritage structure and the new street wall, with a recessed glazed entry providing access to the commercial foyer. - Refine the expression of the street wall to read as a singular horizontal element of similar proportions to the Church Street façade of the heritage building with a clearly defined parapet. - The use of a more contemporary material pallet, to contrast with the heritage structure is an acceptable strategy. However, the scale and proportion of the façade must be developed to better relate to the heritage building. <p>The eventual success of the aesthetic quality of the proposal will be largely dependent upon the detail resolution of the facade. Particular consideration must be given to the junction of materials connecting the new structure to the heritage building. The applicant is encouraged to provide large scale details of these areas to ensure that the design intent / design excellence is realised.</p>
Design Excellence WLEP2009	
Whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building	Further development of the expression of the Crown Street façade and the provision of some larger scale details to better document the design intent is required.

type and location will be achieved	
Whether the form and external appearance of the proposed development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain,	Pending further refinement as outlined above.
Whether the proposed development detrimentally impacts on view corridors,	No view analysis has been provided.
Whether the proposed development detrimentally overshadows an area shown distinctively coloured and numbered on the Sun Plane Protection Map,	The proposal's shadow extends to the civic square within the arts precinct for a short period in the morning. However, it appears that the shadow will sit within shadows created by existing buildings, resulting in no additional over shadowing of the civic square.
How the development addresses the following:	
the suitability of the land for development,	The site is ideally suited to commercial development.
existing and proposed uses and use mix	The proposed use as a commercial building is consistent with Council's vision for this precinct.
heritage issues and streetscape constraints,	An appropriate design strategy / building massing has been developed in response to the heritage structure. Further detailed information documenting the internal treatment of the building and document appropriate material junctions between the new building and heritage structure should also be provided.
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,	Further refinement of the tower position is required.
bulk, massing and modulation of buildings	Further refinement of the tower position is required.
street frontage heights	Appropriate.
environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity	The extent of over shadowing is consistent with the expectation of a building of this scale sited on the northern side of the street. No wind or reflectivity report were provided.
the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development	Reasonable.
pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements	Reasonable.
impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain	The proposed tree plantings at the Crown Street frontage may be problematic rather than a positive contribution to streetscape amenity. It is unclear whether an additional street tree can be

	accommodated in the existing public footpath or whether a blister is required and, if so, whether this is acceptable. Council should be consulted.
Key issues, Comments & Recommendations	<p>The proposal has responded positively to the Panel's previous comments to provide a building form that better relates the desired future character of Crown Street and provides a more appropriate relationship with the Heritage building. However, further refinements are recommended to better relate to the future context and improve amenity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reposition the tower, 1.5m to the east to provide a 6m setback from the western boundary. - Refine the expression of the two-storey street wall fronting Crown Street. - Provision of detail sections. - Relocation of WC in foyer, including active edge of shop 2 to lobby. - Refine the design of the Moore Lane frontage - Consult with Council as to whether street trees and planter boxes are appropriate on the Crown Street frontage