

## Meeting minutes and recommendations

Date	19 April 2023
Meeting location	Wollongong City Council Administration Offices
Panel members	(Chair) Brendan Randles (Member) Tony Quinn (Member) Sue Hobley
Apologies	Pier Panozzo – City Centre & Major Development Manager
Council staff	Brad Harris – Development Project Officer Amanda Kostovski – Design Expert
Guests/ representatives of the applicant	Kathy Davies – Vavayis Architects Anthony Vavayis - Vavayis Architects Fay Vranas – Vavayis Architects Nick Vranas – Client Jeff Mead - Planning Ingenuity Sophie Perry – Planning Ingenuity
Declarations of Interest	None
Item number	2
DA number	DA-2022/395
Reason for consideration by DRP	Voluntary
Determination pathway	Southern Regional Planning Panel
Property address	411-417 Crown Street, Wollongong
Proposal	Amended Plans - Demolition of two (2) residential dwellings and construction of a seven (7) storey health services facility with four (4) basement parking levels
Applicant or applicant's representative address to the design review panel	The meeting was conducted in person and via video link between the Panel (Council offices) and the applicants' team (remote)
Background	<p>The site was inspected by the Panel on 19 April 2023.</p> <p>The Panel has seen the proposal a number of times during the design process – which has been particularly cooperative, illuminating and positive for both the proponents and clients. The proposal is markedly improved – a commendable achievement given the very hard work and potential frustration that successive iterations have required.</p> <p>While it is now able to support the scheme (with the amendments described below), the Panel notes that consent is still highly uncertain – especially given its many impacts on properties to the south and other externalities that are hard to control. It is therefore recommended that greater clarity be given to all impacts on adjacent properties and that stormwater and precise built form detail along the rear boundary be refined and clarified.</p>
<b>Design Quality Principles SEPP 65</b>	
Context and Neighbourhood Character	<p>The Panel and the applicants know the site and context very well, including its medical precinct vocations, streetscape, scale and character, topography and impacts to the southern properties. The Panel accepts that the proponents are unable to purchase the site to the west – which was encouraged during earlier stages of the process. While refinements are required, the Panel supports the massing of the building generally, including its street interface, vehicular and pedestrian entries, side boundary interfaces and rear and front setbacks.</p> <p>The proposal should be shown in its existing and likely future built form context. Adjacent context should be shown on all plans, section and elevations. Similarly landscape should be shown on elevations.</p>

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**Built Form and Scale**

As noted above, the Panel supports the massing of the building generally, including its street interface, vehicular and pedestrian entries, side boundary interfaces and rear and front setbacks. However, to achieve design excellence, a number of amendments and refinements are still required:

- due to its apparent visual and physical bulk, the Panel does not support the inclusion of habitable space at level 6; it would appear that a great amount of the GFA provided at level 6 could be accommodated on level 5, with reduced western and eastern setbacks roof terraces
  - level 5 would result in better built form if it were orthogonally planned, perhaps incorporating stepping along its length (rather than twisting), minimum 3m setbacks from north and south parapets and simple projecting overhangs. Substantial landscaping should be provided to terraces at its eastern and western ends.
  - Roof level plant should be setback a minimum distance of 3m from level 5 alignments and enclosed within a neatly detailed rectilinear compound, defined by a metal screen of consistent height (1.6m maximum height). Solar panels could be neatly integrated beside or within the plant compound, with clear setbacks.
  - Ground level brickwork would be better if it extended up to the level 1 parapet height; ideally, brick materiality would be extended at the same height from east to west, even returning along its western elevation.
  - The west elevation should continue the banded expression of the north and south facades, using clearly aligned joints and subtle shades of colour and/or texture.
  - Due to its minimal projection and detail issues, the glazed awning is not supported. Instead, a solid soffit is recommended with simple flat metal roof and well detailed steel fascia. A central skylight could provide a centrally located light source at the main pedestrian entrance.
  - The Ground Floor terrace off the southern end of the lobby should be extended to the west to enable its use by the proposed café/retail tenancy. The stairs off the terrace to the lower landscape should be secured to prevent public access.
  - Given the physical and visual impacts on southern properties, it is crucial that detailed sections are provided, so as to clearly describe the retaining walls, landscape gardens and balustrades that define the southern interface (including levels, materials and well resolved detail).
  - Given the sensitivity of the southern interface and its influence on the assessment process, shadow impacts on southern properties – especially on 28-32 Staff Street – must be clearly shown at hourly intervals. This documentation should include detailed elevations and plans and tables indicating existing, compliant and proposed solar access at various times of the year.
  - The Panel does not support the timber batten expression of the various service doors along the building frontage; rather than making a feature of these essential service openings, a quiet integration of these doors (with a consistent paint colour) would be preferable.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More care should be given to the incorporation of street facing planters which currently result in problematic relationships with columns – as discussed at the panel meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Density</b>	While the density proposed is supported, the Panel does not support the provision of internal space at level 6.
<b>Sustainability</b>	The Panel notes that there are further opportunities for including sustainability initiatives in the design, such as solar energy generation, rainwater harvesting, EV charging, etc.
<b>Landscape</b>	<p>As noted above, further attention is required to achieve a clean, easy maintenance detail for the interfaces of the planters and columns at the street frontage. An option to incorporate seating into the design would be acceptable if desired.</p> <p>The Panel commends the amended entrance design but considers that the entrance still lacks strong visual clues for pedestrians arriving from the east. It is accepted that design constraints preclude further development of this. It will therefore be important to provide clear identification of the building's address when viewed from the east.</p> <p>The Panel does not support the proposed large expanse of paved terrace on the western end of level 5 or the lack of landscaping to the long section along the southern side of this level. However, the recommended amendments to the level 5 built form will require amendments to the landscape plan for this level and will reduce the area of open terrace. The Panel accepts that both the western and eastern ends of the terrace will diminish in width. They will, however, increase in importance as outdoor space for use by tenants of the building. The amended design should include furniture, fixtures and fittings to support the use of these terraces for outdoor sitting, eating and drinking, and socialising. Planter boxes should provide amenity (such as screening, shade and wind protection) without breaking up the usable areas of the terrace or sightlines. Attention should be given to the southern side of the terrace that currently supports overlooking of the properties to the south of the development but offers little benefit in terms of outdoor use by tenants.</p> <p>The Proposed Plant Schedule should be amended to improve sustainability outcomes in terms of weed threats, support for biodiversity and water management. It is recommended that all trees and a predominance of other plantings be locally indigenous plant species selected on the basis of the environmental conditions of the different spaces of the development.</p>
<b>Amenity</b>	<p>The proposal notes that the internal and external amenity of the proposal has been substantially improved. Outstanding amenity concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the concierge desk in the main lobby creates an awkward congested outcome; given the space required for ramp and access to café and lifts, it may not be possible to house a concierge desk within this space.</li> <li>- See comments above regarding columns and planters</li> <li>- The terrace should be extended west to allow for direct</li> </ul>

	<p>access from café</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided that roof terraces are well designed, roof terraces can be substantially reduced in area without adversely impacting on staff amenity</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	Acceptable
<b>Housing Diversity and Social Interaction</b>	The provision of this facility will make a significant contribution to Wollongong's established medical precinct.
<b>Aesthetics</b>	<p>See notes above regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- brick materiality extending to level 1 parapet height from east and west along the Crown Street elevation.</li> <li>- Glazed awning to be replaced with solid cladding</li> <li>- Level 6 to be removed and replaced with a simple flat overhanging roof.</li> <li>- Streetscape planters.</li> </ul>
<b>Design Excellence WLEP2009</b>	
Whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved	Achieved, provided that refinements are incorporated into the proposal – as noted above.
Whether the form and external appearance of the proposed development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain,	Achieved, provided that refinements are incorporated into the proposal – as noted above.
Whether the proposed development detrimentally impacts on view corridors,	No
Whether the proposed development detrimentally overshadows an area shown distinctively coloured and numbered on the Sun Plane Protection Map,	No – although shadow impacts on southern properties must be completely described – as noted above
How the development addresses the following:	
the suitability of the land for development,	Suitable
existing and proposed uses and use mix	Suitable
heritage issues and streetscape constraints,	Achieved, provided that refinements are incorporated into the proposal – as noted above.
the location of any tower proposed, having regard to the need to achieve an acceptable relationship with other towers (existing or	Achieved, provided that refinements are incorporated into the proposal – as noted above.

proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form,	
bulk, massing and modulation of buildings	Achieved, provided that refinements are incorporated into the proposal – as noted above.
street frontage heights	Achieved, provided that refinements are incorporated into the proposal – as noted above.
environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity	Shadow impacts on southern properties must be completely described – as noted above
the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development	Still to be demonstrated
pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements	Achieved
impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain	Achieved, provided that refinements are incorporated into the proposal – as noted above.
Recommendations	Incorporate all of the above recommendations into the proposal. The Panel does not need to see the proposal again.