

Wollongong Design Review Panel
Meeting minutes and recommendations

Date	17 August 2023
Meeting location	Wollongong City Council Administration Offices
Panel members	(Chair) David Jarvis (Member) Tony Tribe (Member) Marc Deuschle
Apologies	Luke Rollinson – MMJ Wollongong
Council staff	Pier Panozzo – City Centre & Major Development Manager Vanessa Davis – Senior Development Project Officer Amanda Kostovski – Design Expert
Guests/ representatives of the applicant	George Jreige – Urban Link Architects Mark Beauman – Urban Link Architects Ziad Blaq Projects Jared Beneru – Blaq Projects
Declarations of Interest	None
Item number	1
DA number	DA-2022/938
Reason for consideration by DRP	SEPP 65, WLEP 2009 Clause 7.18 Design Excellence
Determination pathway	Southern Regional Planning Panel (CIV>\$30m)
Property address	4-8 Parkinson Street & 377-383 Crown Street, Wollongong
Proposal	Mixed use development - construction of a 21-storey building including commercial and retail spaces, 91 residential apartments and basement carpark
Applicant or applicant's representative address to the design review panel	The meeting was conducted by video link between the Panel (Council offices) and some of the applicants' team (remote).
Background	The site was inspected by the Panel on 4 November 2022. The Panel also had the benefit of the notes of the DRP meeting of 18 October 2021 (DE-2021/133) for a similar proposal. Since the proposal was last reviewed by the Panel, the applicant has acquired an additional site, 377 Crown Street. The addition of 377 Crown Street is an applicant initiative. It did <u>not</u> arise from previous Panel comments. The site was reinspected by the Panel on the 17 th August 2023

Design Quality Principles SEPP 65	
Context and Neighbourhood Character	<p>Given its proximity to the Wollongong Station and Medical Precinct, its Crown Street frontage and outstanding outlook, the site is well-suited to a high-quality mixed-use development. However, the amalgamation of properties on this steeply sloping site, across two zones and two quite different street contexts, increases the complexity of the site.</p> <p>For such a large-scale, prominently located site as this a comprehensive, in-depth site analysis, and a formulation of development objectives based on that analysis, is critical to the development of a design that addresses the complexities of this sloping, off-shaped, dual-frontage site. The ultimate goal of the contextual analysis is to inform a proposal that contributes to a cohesive pattern of development for this precinct. To achieve this goal further development of the potential future building studies for each adjoining site are required:</p> <p><u>375 Crown Street, neighbouring site to the east.</u> The recent acquisition of 377 Crown Street (by the applicant) has significantly reduced the development potential of this site. The site is only 804sqm in area and</p>

positioned between a recently constructed development to the east and the subject site. The Panel are concerned that this site is isolated and unlikely to be redeveloped. As the site no longer has the capacity to contain a tower, its height and potential GFA are restricted. The future built form study provided for this site shows a four-storey street wall building infilling the entire footprint of the site. There are several fundamental issues with the building form depicted in the study that will ultimately reduce the GFA of the proposal / significantly impact its amenity:

- The building form would have a deep footprint that receives very little natural light.
- The building has not been setback to respond the lightwell on the neighbouring building to the east.
- The building has not been setback to respond to the colonnade on the subject property.
- Vehicular access is via Crown Street, this reduces the active frontage of the property and may also not be supported by the RTA.
- The Basement shown in the built form is extremely inefficient, due to the constraints of the site. To accommodate the required 48 parking spaces (as outlined in the study) five levels of basement would be required.
- The best-case scenario for this site if developed in isolation would be a four-storey building, serviced by a five-storey basement with a GFA significantly below the maximum permissible GFA for this site.

At a minimum:

- Vehicular access to this site should be provided from the subject site to assist in providing a more efficient basement and eliminate the need for a vehicular access point on Crown Street.
- The western edge podium (Proposed building on subject site) will be exposed for a significant amount of time. Consideration must be given to how the exposed nil setback wall will be expressed / articulated with high quality materials.
- 32-36 Osborne Street neighbouring site to the west adjoins the southern portion of the subject site. The built form study for this site depicts a mixed-use building with a three-storey street wall to Parkinson Street and a residential tower. The study demonstrates the potential to provide an amenable ADG compliant building on this site. The study also demonstrates that a reasonable relationship can be achieved between the future built form and the subject site.

385, 385A, 385B Crown Street, adjoining sites to the west

- An easement, which currently provides vehicular access to 385 Crown Street is located adjacent to the western boundary of the subject the subject site. The easement requires the proposal to be setback from its western boundary, preventing a continuation of the street wall fronting Crown Street. This will in turn require 385 and 385A Crown Street to provide a setback from its eastern site boundary to respond to the subject site. The Panel are
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concerned breaking the street wall so close to the street corner will create a poor urban form and significantly reduce the development potential of 385 and 385A Crown Street, effectively isolating this site by reducing its development potential.

- 385A Crown Street contains an approved DA for an eight-storey hotel. The hotel has a nil setback to its eastern boundary, which would suggest that a future building form on 385B Crown Street would abut it, to form a street corner building.
- The future built form study provided depicts 385B Crown Street as a three-storey building. This approach relates poorly to the approved building form on 385A Crown Street, failing to acknowledge the site's potential to realise a cohesive street corner form and significantly limiting the potential GFA of the site.
- 385B Crown Street should be depicted as an eight-storey building, given the narrow width of the site the eight-storey building will only be afforded minimum setbacks to its eastern side boundary (adjoining the subject site). This factor will impact how the western façade of the commercial building (levels 6 to 9) will be expressed. This façade must be developed to mitigate potential privacy issues with its future neighbour.
- Vehicular access to 385B Crown Street must be resolved prior to the development of the subject site. Vehicular access to 385B Crown Street should be provided via the subject site, unless a functional easement is already in place via 385A Crown Street.

2 Parkinson Street, adjoining site to the east (southern end)

- A recently constructed mixed use building adjoins the eastern boundary in the southern portion of the site. The proposal on the subject site provides a direct connection to the podium of the neighbour, providing a continuous 3 storey street wall fronting Parkinson Street.
- Detail sections showing the interface between podiums demonstrate that the proposed podium will sit approximately 2m above the podium of its neighbour. Careful detailed resolution of the interfaces between podiums must ensure the privacy and security of both podiums. Ideally, the podium on the subject site would be lowered to better relate to its neighbour.

It is noted that the current survey excludes key information on existing utility services, bus stop, and detail of current adjacent development. Survey information should be updated to include additional site and its context, services etc. Extent of abutting 375 buildings should be shown on relevant elevations.

Site and Context Analysis summary constraints and opportunities plans should be included in the DA architectural drawings. This should include the new site and implications now that pedestrian link - a Parkinson St to Station - appears unrealistic. The application should also clearly describe the extent of works being undertaken/proposed under previous consents.

Built Form and Scale**Basement**

The current proposal does not provide basement parking below the recently acquired site (377 Crown Street). By extending the basement into 377 Crown Street opportunities to improve the efficiency of the carpark and potentially reduce the number of parking levels will be created. The extension of the basement into 377 Crown Street is also required to accommodate vehicular access to 375 Crown Street (refer to comments above, Context and neighbourhood character).

Crown Street interface

The lack of a continuous street wall to Crown Street remains a concern (refer to comments above, Context and Neighbourhood Character). However, the Panel acknowledges that the proposed brick colonnade will contribute to an articulate and appropriately scaled street wall to Crown Street.

The entrance to the retail mall is Clearly defined within the street wall. However, all retail units fronting Crown Street sit on a flat slab at a consistent RL which results in a mall entrance that sits approximately 1m above the street and a series of steps that separate the retail tenancies from the street. An accessible path of travel is only available at the far western end of the street.

Consideration should be given to stepping the level of each retail tenancy to provide an accessible point of entry from the street. The retail mall could also be lowered to allow a step free point of access from the street. Pedestrian circulation behind the colonnade should ideally be continuous (not broken by planters).

A retail tenancy has been introduced at level 4. The tenancy is largely recessed below street level and has a floor-to-floor height of only 3m. The tenancy will not provide a functional / quality retail space. If the entry to the retail mall is lowered by approximately 1m, the eastern tenancy at level 5 can be developed to better relate to / activate the street.

The residential entry is extremely hard to discern within the Crown Street façade. A more clearly defined entry should be provided to the residential building. It is Suggested that the entry be moved one colonnade bay east to provide a legible/direct experience.

Retail

The level 5 retail space has been developed to provide improved circulation and eliminate dead end spaces. However, the Panel continue to question the viability of much of the retail space that is spread over several levels and has no direct connection to the street. The retail levels fronting Parkinson Street at levels 3 and 4 are of particular concern as these tenancies have no direct connection to either street frontage, they appear to be more suited to use as commercial suits rather than traditional retail.

The floor-to-floor height of the retail units fronting Parkinson Street is 3.4m. This is less than the 4m floor to ceiling dimension encouraged by the ADG. It is a concern that the comparatively tight floor to floor height will further restrict the potential of these spaces.

The proposed eat streets laneway, adjacent to the western boundary sits awkwardly against the sloping vehicle easement, leaving a barren unusable space that will likely exist long after the easement is eventually removed. Confining 'Eat Street' to the north-western edge of the development seems like an odd decision when it appears that the entire floor is designed similarly – with linear spaces besides retail - to allow for F+B functions. If the intent

	<p>of 'Eat Street' is to have a future expansion to the west, it should be demonstrated how this could be achieved with the current design.</p> <p><u>Parkinson Street interface</u></p> <p>Parkinson Street currently has no active retail presence, the proposed development will be critical in establishing an amiable retail character for the street. To accommodate some flexibility into the potential future uses of retail spaces fronting Parkinson Street, access directly from the street should be provided to both tenancies. Increased floor to ceiling heights would also assist in providing a more flexible space that is better suited a variety of uses.</p> <p>Exploration of how the substation could be integrated into the development should continue to be explored, as should how the development abuts its neighbours the east and west along this street.</p> <p><u>Cross site link</u></p> <p>The Panel were informed that it was unlikely that potential to connect the eastern end of Parkinson Street with Gladstone Avenue would be realised. This development further diminishes the rationale behind providing a cross site link between Crown Street and a dead-end cul-de-sac. The current proposal should be considered as facilitating access between both streets, but only for the limited convenience of residents and tenants. Circulation through the site does not need to facilitate a cross site link target towards the general public which is accessible 24 hours a day.</p> <p><u>Residential tower</u></p> <p>The north south orientation of the tower in the northern portion of the site, fronting Crown Street assists in mitigating the impact (overshadowing) of the proposal upon the lower scale residential neighbours to the south. However, if the Panel are to accept the design rationale established in the potential future built form studies (that 375 Crown Street will not accommodate a tower). The rationale behind the location of the residential tower must be questioned. Does the current strategy to provide minimal setback (ADG part 3F) from the future tower to the west whilst providing separation in excess of 40m from the tower to the east provide the best spatial relationship between towers with regards to urban form, amenity and over shadowing of the low-density residential neighbourhood to the south?</p>
Density	<p>Further contextual analysis is required to demonstrate how the proposal relates to the immediate / future context of the site to establish if the proposal presents an over development of the site.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The proposed residential flat building appears capable of meeting ADG requirements for solar access.</p> <p>The residential tower contains 8 units per floor on a typical level, only 50% of units appear capable of providing natural cross ventilation. To meet ADG requirements additional units are serviced by a plenum. Further detail information is required to document how the plenum is accommodated within the form of the building and how louvered outlets are incorporated into the building façade.</p> <p>Initiatives that should be included to improve the proposal's environmental credentials include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities to harvest rainwater for use in maintaining any plantings established on the building or the site should be explored. Other water minimisation measures (reuse of rainwater for toilet flushing and washing machines) should also be considered. - The use of solar power and solar water heating, as well as general electrification, is strongly encouraged, particularly to service communal circulation and parking areas. - Low embodied energy should be a consideration in material and finish selections. - Landscape plantings should address aims for biodiversity protection, weed minimisation and low water use. - The Panel strongly recommends that electric vehicle charging stations be provided in the different carpark levels and that spaces for car-sharing vehicles be provided. - A gas-free energy provision is encouraged for the whole development.
Landscape	<p><u>Parkinson Street</u> The landscape / streetscape design needs to propose or better consider exactly the type of commercial / retail spaces that will front Parkinson Street. This will help inform how best to activate this edge, whether seats and planters are the best urban outcome (they appear to solve levels at the moment but not engage the space), and how best to resolve levels.</p> <p>Given the falls across this frontage, the placement of doors may be restricted to a limited zone. This may further influence how the landscape is resolved.</p> <p><u>Crown Street</u> The levels along Crown Street suggest that steps leading up to a single floor level, consistent across the site, may not provide the best outcome for this frontage. On the eastern end, the colonnade suddenly turns into a service corridor with planters above, rather than continuing the length of the street as it should. This creates a space that can neither be used for seating (due to the need for circulation) nor successfully activates the retail frontage (due to the sunken nature of the space).</p> <p>The stairs between columns will require a lot of handrails and perhaps more of these opening should be a flush transition to the footpath. This would mean stepping the floor plate as outlined above (built form).</p> <p><u>Level 5</u> As noted above there is a linear design to the outdoor spaces on this level which suggest a circulation-focussed approach rather than one that is trying to carve out usable space for tenants and visitors. The wider central opening has potential for more but with the addition of 2 planters and a deck it takes on very similar proportions to all other spaces.</p> <p>It should be demonstrated what the likely make-up of tenants on this floor will be (F+B seems likely) and the landscape should react</p>

	<p>to this, as well as creating inviting spaces in its own right. A spatial hierarchy of differently sized spaces should be investigated.</p> <p><u>Level 8</u></p> <p>The commercial rooftop terrace to the north is likely to be only occupied by the adjacent tenant due to its location. It may be better to leave this space to be fitted out by the tenant.</p> <p>The terrace to the east is of a size that may be too large to benefit just a single tenant and would therefore be better accessible by all commercial tenants. It should be designed to cater for this by creating a series of rooms that provide suitable amenity and program for workers during lunch or outdoor work. Any planters for trees need to be enlarged to create adequate volume for them to thrive.</p> <p><u>Level 10</u></p> <p>This level is the only level dedicated to COS for the residents of this development. As such it appears inadequate in achieving the 25% site area minimum. Given the number of residents this development will house, more COS must be provided. The upper rooftop may be too windy and exposed to provide meaningful COS but could be investigated.</p> <p>With regards to what is provided, and similar to comments made about the level 5 retail landscape, there is a need for more usable space rather than circulation. The NE corner of both portions of COS are predominantly circulation with little recreational value. These in particular need further attention to create usable space.</p> <p>The colocation of the BBQ area to the east of the internal communal room seems logical but the threshold between them is very tight. If more could be done to open this up it would benefit both spaces.</p> <p>More detail needs to be provided about the type of play that is being provided.</p> <p>On the southern tower the ramp to get up to the pool area uses a large proportion of the total area and provide no other benefit. Could the pool be sunken to allow the entire roof to be used? Could the ramp be compressed to use less space? Could a lift service the pool area? Given more space is required generally, this needs to be better resolved.</p> <p>The pool area itself could benefit from more space also, the three little zones, each shown just large enough for two sunlounges, will unlikely be enough to allow comfortable use of the area in peak times.</p> <p>There is very little solar or wind protection shown. Likewise, there are a lot of materials that will exacerbate the UHIE including a large amount of paving and artificial lawn. The choice of materials, and addition of shelter, must be better considered.</p>
Amenity	<p>The area of COS provided should be increased to meet minimum ADG requirements (refer to detail comments above, Landscape).</p> <p>Facades of commercial buildings orientated towards side boundaries must be developed to mitigate potential visual privacy issues, appropriate screening must be incorporated.</p> <p>The previous strong through-site pedestrian link has been downgraded recognising any link eastward to station is unlikely.</p>

	<p>Escalators are now proposed to link Crown St level 5 to level 4 only.</p> <p>The lowered floor-to-floor height of retail/commercial uses below level 5 should be reconsidered (refer to detail comment above, Built form).</p> <p>The impractical, unsafe lowered headroom to the dock area nominated 'ambulance' should be re-considered.</p> <p>The viable quantum and configuration of both retail and commercial in the current market, in this location, needs to be substantiated.</p> <p>The applicant advised that 'public access/through site link' areas will not be available 24/7 and will be secured 'after hours'.</p> <p>In a mixed-use project of this scale and complexity it is strongly recommended that an indicative ownership/management strategy form part of the application.</p> <p>Improvements have been made to providing a strategy for servicing retail spaces. However, the sole goods lift serving retail/commercial uses is apparently the lift adjacent to the dock. The adequacy of service circulation, particularly bulky goods should be verified. The majority of retail tenancies still appear to be dependent upon deliveries and waste being carried directly through the public mall areas.</p> <p><u>Residential</u></p> <p>Detail assessment of unit layouts was difficult, given the small scale of apartment plans available to the Panel. Recommended larger scale unit plans, clearly labelled and dimensioned, particularly before/after adaptable plans, form part of any consent documents. From the information provided the following observations are made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some units appear to provide internalised study areas. A window should be visible from any point within a habitable room. - Some kitchens appear to be deeply recessed and form part of the circulation into the living rooms (e.g. north west corner unit level 11). - Bedroom doors that open directly into living spaces should be avoided. - All areas of POS must be dimensioned to confirm compliance with all ADG spatial requirements. <p>Shadow Diagrams drawings appear not to indicate date (assumed 21/6) This should be confirmed on documents together with clarification of non-complying impacts on the precinct.</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>The safety and security of the proposed arcade relies solely on the commercial success of its tenancies; with its significant length over multiple levels, the Panel is concerned that it may fail to attract long term tenants. Consideration should also be given as to how the mall is secured after hours.</p> <p>The traffic capacity of the Parkinson Street cul-de-sac and safety of single vehicular entry/exit must be established.</p> <p>The BCA consultant's report should confirm compliance particularly in relation to egress and fire services. Any reliance on</p>

	'engineered solutions' should be clearly described, and DA drawings should incorporate any implications to planning.
Housing Diversity and Social Interaction	The proposed mix of uses could potentially provide an appropriate contribution to the neighbourhood. However, the Panel remain concerned as to the viability of the retail as currently configured.
Aesthetics	<p>The residential tower façade appears to have an imposed verticality with no clearly discernible relationship to orientation, structure, internal function, or materiality. Further detail is required to clearly establish the how the façade treatment relates to each unit. Unit plans should clearly show the position / depth of each vertical element to establish its impact upon the amenity of each apartment.</p> <p>The use of a face-brick podium street-wall and Crown St Colonnade is appropriate. Detail sections showing corbelling and brick soffit demonstrate a considered approach to the detail resolution of the colonnade.</p> <p>With the exception of the brick colonnade the majority of external finishes are painted finishes. The Panel are concerned that reliance upon applied finishes will result in a high maintenance building that will age rapidly. Further development of the material pallet is required.</p> <p>It is noted a simple office module façade is proposed for the southern offices and a different façade treatment reflecting that of the residential tower above is proposed for the Crown St offices. Adopting a simplified, more consistent approach could be of urban design and sustainability benefit.</p> <p>Servicing of the building must be considered at this stage of the design process. The location of service risers, car park exhausts, AC condensers, down pipes and fire hydrant boosters should be shown.</p>
Design Excellence WLEP2009	
Whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved	Further development required.
Whether the form and external appearance of the proposed development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain,	Further development required.
Whether the proposed development detrimentally impacts on view corridors,	View opportunities and potential impacts on adjacent and future development have not been addressed
Whether the proposed development detrimentally overshadows an area shown distinctively coloured and numbered on the Sun Plane Protection Map,	N/A
How the development addresses the following:	

the suitability of the land for development,	Suitable
existing and proposed uses and use mix	Proposed uses are appropriate; However, the quantum, location, access, and configuration of retail uses warrants expert market input to confirm viability.
heritage issues and streetscape constraints,	Improvements have been made to the proposal's interfaces with both street frontages. However, further develop is required. The Panel is unaware of any Heritage issues.
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,	The Panel questions the rationale behind the position of the residential tower, given the change in future context resulting from the acquisition of 377 Crown Street.
bulk, massing and modulation of buildings	Further refinement required.
street frontage heights	Generally acceptable.
environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity	Further development required.
the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development	Further development required.
pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements	The single access for residents, visitors, shoppers, office workers parking (300 cars over 4 levels) together with service vehicles serving shops, offices and apartments, will potentially create on-site conflicts. <u>All</u> parking access is through the dock turning area. Expert independent assessment is recommended re: safety, amenity, security, and convenience.
impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain	Further development required
Key issues, further Comments & Recommendations	<p>In response to the Panel's previous comments, some positive developments have been made, including improved interfaces to both streets and a clearer expression of tower forms. However, the acquisition of 377 Crown Street has resulted in the isolation of 375 Crown Street and altered the likely future context to which the development must respond. Further development of the future built form studies is necessary to inform refinements to the current proposal. Further development / consideration must also be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - viability of retail spaces with limited exposure and connection to the street - further refinement of both street interfaces - placement of tower form - quality of residential entrance - quality of residential amenity - pedestrian circulation through carpark and retail spaces - security of mall - ADG cross ventilation compliance - impact on lower scale residential to the south

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- adoption of further environmental initiatives- better amenity and program, and compliant minimum size, of COS- further detail development to provide a high aesthetic quality.
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