

Wollongong Design Review Panel (Via MS Teams)
Meeting minutes and recommendations

Date	30 June 2020
Meeting location	Wollongong City Council Administration Offices
Panel members	David Jarvis Gabrielle Morrish Sue Hobley
Apologies	Nil
Council staff	Pier Panozzo – City Centre & Major Development Manager Vanessa Davis – Senior Development Project Officer
Guests/ representatives of the applicant	Georges Jreije & Design Team – Architects Luke Rollinson - MMJ Wollongong Jared Beneru - Blaq Project Pty Ltd
Declarations of Interest	Nil
Item number	1
DA number	DA-2020/535
Reason for consideration by DRP	SEPP 65, Clause 7.18 Design Excellence WLEP2009
Determination pathway	SRPP
Property address	383 Crown Street Wollongong & 4-8 Parkinson Street Wollongong
Proposal	Staged construction of multilevel mixed use (commercial/residential) development with Basement parking
Applicant or applicant's representative address to the design review panel	This meeting was conducted by video link between the panel (Council's offices) and the applicant's team (remote). The applicant summarised the proposal
Background	A pre-lodgement meeting was held on 5 April 2019 under PL-2019/38 which only comprised Lots 81 & 82 Parkinson Street and did not include lot 83 Parkinson Street or Lots 6 & 7 crown Street. The site was Inspected by the Panel on 30 June 2020
Design quality principals SEPP 65	
Context and Neighbourhood Character	The proposal is located within Wollongong's commercial core. It consists of five amalgamated lots, two of which front Crown Street and the remaining three Parkinson Street. Crown street presents as an active centre containing tall, dense building forms. In contrast, Parkinson Street is a more low-key cul-de-sac, which borders a lower density residential zone (R1).
Built Form and Scale	<p>The proposal consists of two separate building forms, a 17 storey commercial tower fronting Crown Street and a 12 storey mixed use building fronting Parkinson Street. Both buildings are serviced by a basement accessed from Parkinson Street.</p> <p>Crown Street</p> <p><u>Isolated lot, 385 Crown Street</u></p> <p>The proposal isolates the adjoining site to the west, 385 Crown street. The Panel is greatly concerned that the remaining lot is only a little over 12m in width and may not be able to be developed in isolation to provide a functional/economically feasible building form. The Panel is concerned that the isolated site will remain an unrealised gap in the street wall. The applicant is encouraged to seek amalgamation with the neighbouring site to facilitate orderly and economically viable development. If the current proposal is to be considered, a more detailed study of development potential of the neighbouring lot is required. The study should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will vehicular access / servicing be provided? • How will a basement / vehicle parking be accommodated?

- What amenity will be provided to this building, depth of floor plates access to light?
- How would this future development and the subject site interface and how might that influence the design of the subject site?
- Economic feasibility

Position of tower within the city block

The omission of the neighbouring site to the west also compromises the pattern of development along the remainder of the city block. Towers are generally located on or close to corners. This provides a strong vertical landmark and allows more space on the remainder of the block to accommodate additional towers with appropriate spacing between them. The proposed location of the tower limits the potential for additional towers to be located on the remaining sites to the east.

Easement, providing access to 385 Crown Street

An easement providing access to 385 Crown street is located along the western boundary of the site. This easement has been utilised to provide pedestrian circulation through the site and relate to the pedestrian entry for the proposed commercial building. On the Panel's site visit it was observed that this easement is currently used for vehicle access to 385 Crown street. The applicant confirmed that the current design intent was to maintain vehicle access to the neighbour via this easement.

The existing easement falls significantly away from the street to provide access to the neighbour's carparking spaces. The currently proposed easement shows vehicular access to the neighbouring site located over a level slab, that no longer falls away from the street. The proposed easement would no longer provide usable vehicular access to the neighbouring site. Vehicles would be at a level significantly higher than the existing parking level at the point where they would enter the neighbouring site.

A functional access strategy must be developed for and agreed with the neighbouring site.

Note: building above the easement at a higher level and mixing the vehicle access of the neighbouring site with the pedestrian access for the proposed development are also issues that concern the Panel.

Street wall to Crown Street

Drawing DA-208 rev 5 Crown Street streetscape, shows how the proposal relates to the approved 8 storey street corner building 385A Crown Street. From this drawing it is unclear how the scale, form or composition of the proposed building base will relate to its neighbour to provide a legible street wall to Crown Street.

The applicant is encouraged to consider this issue when developing a built form solution for 385 Crown Street (as outlined above, Isolated lot, 385 Crown Street). This study will assist in considering the Crown Street façade as part of a street wall and help inform further refinements to the composition of the building base.

Western set back of tower

Further development of built form potential on the neighbouring site is required to justify the proposed 3m set back to the 17 storey high commercial tower.

	<p>Parkinson Street</p> <p><u>Interface with 373 Crown street</u></p> <p>The podium of the approved mixed-use building on the adjoining lot to the east is set back approximately 12m from the street boundary. The current proposal's 4 storey base abuts (nil set back) its eastern boundary, leaving a largely blank façade exposed to the street.</p> <p>A nil set back to a side boundary is acceptable where another building adjoins it or would in the future adjoin it to form a continuous street wall. Where this is not the case and the wall will remain exposed, a setback should be provided equivalent to that of the adjacent development. The south eastern corner of the podium should be developed in response to its context. The set back to the eastern boundary should be increased (suggest 3m) to provide opportunities for landscaping, an articulated façade and to enhance the amenity of the proposed residential units.</p> <p><u>Extent of ground floor retail</u></p> <p>A relatively small portion of the Parkinson Street frontage is dedicated to retail usage. Consideration should be given to relocating some of the plant and visitor parking on the western side of the residential lobby to allow for additional street level retail. It is suggested that this could replace the 69sqm of commercial space located at podium level (lower ground 1) which will be largely inaccessible to anyone other than residents of this development.</p> <p><u>Tower setbacks</u></p> <p>The proposed tower does not comply with ADG setback requirements or council's building separation requirements. The north facing balconies of the tower are of particular concern, as they are vulnerable to potential privacy issues from the proposed commercial building and future development of the adjoining site to the north. Consideration should be given to developing a smaller tower form with 6 units per level, this will assist with minimising potential privacy issues as well as assisting with compliance of ADG solar access and cross ventilation requirements.</p>
Density	<p>Further refinement of the proposal's interfaces with neighbouring buildings is required to prevent the proposal from presenting as an over-development of this site.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The largely glazed façade of the commercial building requires careful detail consideration to ensure that an environmentally responsive building is developed. Further detail information documenting the proposed screening and glazing type is required. Large scale detail sections should be provided.</p> <p><u>Solar access</u></p> <p>DA documents claim 71% of units provide ADG compliant solar access. The following units do not comply with ADG solar access requirements 201, 301, 401, 501, 601, 701 (no solar to private open space) LG04 and 104. 38 of the proposed 65 units receive ADG compliant solar access, 58% of units meet ADG standard. The minimum requirement of the ADG (70%) has not been achieved.</p> <p>It should also be noted that solar access to the majority of these units will be eliminated when the remaining lots on Crown Street</p>

	<p>are developed. Solar access to the residential communal open space will also be eliminated.</p> <p><u>Natural Cross Ventilation</u></p> <p>DA documents claim 63% of units provide ADG compliant natural cross ventilation. The following units do not comply with ADG natural cross ventilation requirements LG.03, G1.02, 1.02 (privacy issue) 38 of the proposed 65 units, 58% of units meet ADG standard. The minimum requirement of the ADG (60%) has not been achieved.</p>
Landscape	<p><u>Streetscape</u></p> <p>1. Crown Street</p> <p>The Crown Street address of the commercial building does not appear to be sufficiently clear and strong. The entry is via a single hinged door accessed off the driveway easement. It is not easily visible to visitors, particularly those arriving from the east. Locations of street number, building name, mailboxes and the listing of building occupants' addresses should be shown on the plans. Access along the building and driveway easement to the rear private communal open space and as an address point for the rear building is not appropriate and there should be a clear delineation between public entrances and private/restricted areas.</p> <p>Pedestrian access to the residential component of the development from Crown Street is desirable, provided it is secure, straight-forward, separate and clearly distinguishable from the commercial access and provides clear sightlines through to the residential tower at the rear.</p> <p>Four street tree plantings are shown in the nature strip of Crown Street at the northern frontage. The Panel questions the suitability and appropriateness of <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> 'Little Gem' in this location. The proposed species, number of trees and locations of planting beds should be confirmed with Council. The awning of the building may require cut-outs to accommodate the crowns of the trees as they grow.</p> <p>2. Parkinson Street</p> <p>The Panel is concerned that the design of the podium of the residential component of the development does not satisfactorily address the Parkinson Street streetscape or the relationships with its neighbours, existing or future. The following points should be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topography of the site and its surrounds requires a more sensitive response. The building should sit into the ground plane, rather than relying on a strip wall along the base of the commercial component • The setback of the development to the east from Parkinson Street should be complemented by a setback in the south-eastern portion of the building that enables an integrated, spatially harmonious landscape to be achieved for the two sites.

- The Panel questions the need for such a large plant room (or a second sub-station) that generates a blank wall on the southern street elevation. It is noted that a sub-station is shown in part of the plant room on the Landscape Plan; this requires clarification, justification and consistency in future documentation.
- A safe, clearly defined pedestrian path from the retail visitor parking to the retail unit should be available via the street. It is noted that pedestrian entry through the basement carpark is not clear or straight-forward, and is even more problematic for wheelchairs, prams, etc.

Private Open Space (POS)

See below under Amenity for issues arising from lightwells. Future over-shadowing year-round, including by developments to the north and east, needs to be considered when developing the lay-outs and plantings of POS. It is not clear that this is the case. Solar access diagrams indicate that POS in lightwells will receive no direct sunlight in mid-winter winter.

In the absence of a species list, it is not possible to consider the suitability of proposed plantings for the locations indicated.

Concerns are raised about the quality of the POS on Lower Ground Level 2 below the 2 lightwells. They will require careful design, detailing and plant selection to succeed. The proposed 1/3 decking strip, 1/3 flagstone paving strip and 1/3 garden bed appears simplistic and inappropriate for the constraints of these spaces. Easy to maintain, safe underfoot surfaces should be preferred, along with a garden lay-out that will help screen the 3 high walls that enclose the space. Materials and finishes of the walls should be carefully selected. The usually (but not always) heavily shaded conditions will need to drive species selection (ferns and palms and rainforest species may work, provided they are suitably irrigated). The lack of good ventilation will need to be considered; expanses of dense moisture-loving plantings may give rise to dankness and other problems.

The privacy issues arising from balconies overlooking the sunken POS in the lightwells needs to be addressed.

Odd-shaped balconies, such as those shown on the southern elevation, can be problematic in terms of utility and maintenance.

The terraces of the northern units lower ground level 1 are extremely generous.

Lower Ground Level 1 Private Communal Open Space (COS 1)

Shadow diagrams that include impacts of all sites to the east, north and west are required to confirm that the area will have acceptable solar access under likely future development scenarios.

The proposed commercial space that intrudes into the COS1 significantly reduces the landscape design potential of the COS to support the social and physical well-being of the development's residents. The COS should be linked to a communal room with ablution, kitchen and socialising facilities. The conversion of the commercial space into such a space is desirable.

The rationale behind the lay-out and size of garden beds is difficult to work out. The building overhang does not appear to have been

	<p>taken into account. Neither does access for maintenance or gardening activities by residents.</p> <p>What is the relationship between the POS on level 1 (commercial component) and COS1? Is free access between them proposed? Is the gate giving access to COS1 secured? Is visual access proposed?</p> <p><u>Level 8 Private Communal Open Space (COS8)</u></p> <p>The same concerns are raised in relation to garden layouts and plantings under building overhangs as for COS1.</p> <p>The barbecue is located close to the entry from the lobby, which may result in congestion, particularly given the proposed planter in the centre of the space.</p> <p>A communal room with facilities (kitchen, toilets, storage) should be linked to the COS8.</p> <p>The proposed activities duplicate those proposed for COS1. More thought should be given to increasing the variety of outdoor activities available for residents of the building. (It is unclear what purpose is served by the patch of artificial turf.)</p> <p><u>General</u></p> <p>Barbecues for both COS1 and COS8 are proposed under building overhangs, where vents are required. The option to also provide a barbecue under the open sky should be considered, both for amenity and sustainability.</p> <p>Pebbles are not an ideal surface for non-trafficable roofs – they collect litter, leaves and provide habitat for weeds.</p>
<p>Amenity</p>	<p><u>Commercial suite, lower ground level podium</u></p> <p>The commercial space located on the lower ground level podium will be suitable for use by residents of this development only. It is suggested that will space be utilised as a communal room for the use of residents only.</p> <p><u>Balcony and room sizes</u></p> <p>Many of the proposed residential balconies appear narrow and do not provide functional spaces. For example, unit 109 appears to be inaccessible once furniture has been accommodated in the living room. The balcony also appears unable to accommodate a table and chairs. Furniture layout should be shown on all balconies and dimensions demonstrating ADG compliance with minimum room and balcony sizes should be provided.</p> <p><u>Lightwells</u></p> <p>The level 01 timber-decked courtyard at the base of the lightwell in the eastern elevation of the northern building will have very poor amenity due to poor ventilation and solar access and lack of outlook.</p> <p>The private open spaces on the lower ground level 2 of the southern building that are both serviced by lightwells will have no outlook and likely problematic ventilation and limited solar access due to their enclosure within four walls. Both spaces are overlooked from the balconies of units above.</p>

	<p><u>Residential Entry off Parkinson Street</u></p> <p>The corridor/lobby to the lifts from the pedestrian entry to the residential building should be more generous. Access to bulky waste storage is off this lobby, raising potential amenity issues.</p> <p><u>Apartment Entries</u></p> <p>Doorways to some apartments are directly opposite lifts and open straight into living spaces, raising privacy concerns and potential congestion problems.</p> <p>The configuration of doorways to 3 apartments all located together at the end of a corridor raises concerns about congestion and potential privacy issues.</p>
Safety	<p>The proposed easement accessed from Crown Street mixes pedestrian circulation with vehicular access to the neighbouring site. The potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians is a significant safety concern.</p> <p>The commercial space located on the lower ground level podium will allow open access to the communal open space of the residential building. This will compromise the security of the residential building.</p> <p>Residents currently utilizing basement parking appear to be required to walk up a vehicular ramp to access the residential building. Bicycle parking, servicing the residential building should be conveniently located within the residential basement, with an accessible path of travel provided from the parking space to the lift.</p>
Housing Diversity and Social Interaction	<p>The proposal will provide an appropriate mix of uses / housing option for this precinct.</p>
Aesthetics	<p>It is anticipated that the building aesthetic will alter significantly in response to the Panel's comments regarding building form, context and sustainability issues.</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 accommodated.</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 detail 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,	

Whether the proposed development detrimentally overshadows an area shown distinctively coloured and numbered on the Sun Plane Protection Map,	No
How the development addresses the following:	
the suitability of the land for development,	The site is of an appropriate size and location to accommodate the proposed mix of uses.
existing and proposed uses and use mix	The proposed mix of uses is appropriate for this location.
heritage issues and streetscape constraints,	Further development of both the Crown Street and Parkinson Road frontages are required.
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 development is required.
bulk, massing and modulation of buildings	Further development is required.
street frontage heights	Further contextual analysis is required to determine an appropriate response to Crown Street.
environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity	Further development is required.
the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development	Further development is required.
pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements	Resolution of the easement providing vehicle access to 385 Crown Street is required
impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain	Resolution of Crown Street pedestrian entry and increased activation of Parkinson Street are required.
Key issues, further Comments & Recommendations	<p>The panel are concerned that there are fundamental issues with this proposal that need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation of 385 Crown Street • Provision of easement to 385 Crown street • Development of appropriate street wall to Crown street • Justification of none-compliant western side boundary set back of commercial building • Parkinson street interface with 373 Crown Street • Residential tower setbacks • Compliance with ADG solar access and natural cross ventilation requirements