

**MINUTES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING
17th March 2020****DEP PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Rory Toomey	Chairperson	Government Architect NSW
Caroline Pidcock	Panel Member	Pidcock
Geoff Baker	Panel Member	Geoff Baker Design Consult Pty Ltd

APOLOGIES:

NIL.

OBSERVERS:

Scott Sidhom	Coordinator Urban Design	Liverpool City Council
John F. Morgan	Director Property & Commercial Development	Liverpool City Council
George Nehme	Acting Manager Development Assessment	Liverpool City Council
Boris Santana	Principal Planner	Liverpool City Council

ITEM DETAILS:

Item Number: 1.

Application Reference Number: DA-585/2019.

Property Address: 40-46, 52 & 64 Scott Street, Liverpool and 306-310 Macquarie Street, Liverpool (School of Arts).

Meeting Venue: Liverpool City Council – Banksia Room, Ground Floor, 33 Moore Street, Liverpool NSW 2170.

Time: 9:00 – 11:00.

Proposal: Concept development application pursuant to Section 4.22 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 for a new mixed-use precinct known as Liverpool Civic Place at 52 Scott Street and 306-310 Macquarie Street, Liverpool ('the site').

1.0 WELCOME, ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND OPENING

The Chairperson introduced the Panel and Council staff to the Applicant Representatives. Attendees signed the Attendance Registration Sheet.

The Liverpool Design Excellence Panel's (the Panel), comments are to assist Liverpool City Council in its consideration of the Development Application.

The absence of a comment under any of the principles does not necessarily imply that the Panel considers the particular matter has been satisfactorily addressed, as it may be that changes suggested under other principles will generate a desirable change.

All nine design principles must be considered and discussed. Recommendations are to be made for each of the nine principles, unless they do not apply to the project. If repetition of recommendations occur, these may be grouped together but must be acknowledged.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NIL.

3.0 PRESENTATION

The applicant presented their proposal for DA-585/2019, 40-46, 52 & 64 Scott Street, Liverpool and 306-310 Macquarie Street, Liverpool (School of Arts).

4.0 DEP PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The nine design principles were considered by the panel in discussion of the Development Application. These are 1] **Context**, 2] **Built Form + Scale**, 3] **Density**, 4] **Sustainability**, 5] **Landscape**, 6] **Amenity**, 7] **Safety**, 8] **Housing Diversity + Social Interaction**, 9] **Aesthetics**.

Following a presentation on 26th November 2019, the following DEP recommendations were made:

The Design Excellence Panel reviewed the amended documentation, considered the various issues that were raised and prepared the following recommendations:

Overall, the panel supports the revised scheme and acknowledges that the recommendations made in the previous DEP meeting minutes have been addressed, including changes to the proposed building envelopes, vehicular access routes and landscape concept plans, all of which has resulted in an improved scheme.

4.1. Context

- The panel acknowledges that the location and form of the library building envelope has been revised to increase the proposed area of public domain, and the proposed civic plaza has been redesigned to be level with Scott Street and provide direct entry/level access to the Council Administration Building and library building. This redesign is supported and it is noted that it will result in a significant improvement to the useability and presence of the civic plaza space within the city centre and ensure greater exposure to the entrance of the proposed Council Administration Building.

- The panel commends the consultants and Council staff for their ongoing efforts with RMS to increase vehicle access from Terminus Street. Notwithstanding this notable success, the Panel understands that access from Scott Street is still required. This is accepted. The access should be via a pedestrian shared zone which, with the reduced car parking numbers, will provide a safe environment for all users. Provision will be required to allow for the closing of this new shared way at special event times, for weekend markets and the like. Alternative vehicle access will be needed at these times.
- The revised scheme accommodates the level change (i.e. between Scott Street and Terminus Street) within the building enabling the public plaza ground plane to be lowered to the level of Scott Street, improving its usability and connectivity to surroundings.
- Whilst the proposed library, due to its form and position, will stand out as a public building, the entrance to the Council building (and importantly the Council Chambers) on the south side of the plaza is diagrammatic only at this stage; how the envelope proposed will support a legible and amenable entrance to the building is not clear. Whilst it is now a common approach for Council Administration Buildings to be located within office buildings, it should still read as a civic building, particularly given the co-location with the library addressing a major new public outdoor space. If a suitable design solution for this requires modification of the building envelope, this should be done now, so as not to limit an excellent outcome in the future.
- The fact the public square is addressed by public buildings on two sides is a good design outcome. The permeability and filtration throughout the ground floor is supported and helps connect the 'Civic Square' and 'Civic Green' spaces. Ensure the same level of permeability and filtration is achieved in the Council Administration Building as well, by locating public functions on the ground floor (e.g. Customer Service front counters and Council chambers).
- The panel supports the location and uses for the proposed 'Civic Green' (i.e. encompassing Augusta Cullen Plaza). However, this space needs to be a key focus of the proposal as it progresses, with detailed and resolved designs to ensure the opportunity of the space is fully realised.
- The panel acknowledges that there are air rights over Augusta Cullen Plaza, limiting Council's ability to propose trees within the plaza. However, the panel urges Council to continue to liaise with the adjacent property owners and negotiate to plant trees within the plaza. Provision of shade and pockets of open space is needed for the success of the public plaza and to ensure that it will be heavily used.
- The design of the plaza needs to factor in operational requirements (e.g. for activation events), but not be driven by these requirements. The plaza needs to be designed to be a great public space for the city, which is attractive and functional when it is not being used for events (i.e. majority of the time).
- It is recommended that Council ensures that approval of the Master Plan preserves the separation between the building envelopes and public domain. Any articulation and/or an extension of the library should be to improve the amenity of the library and/or adjacent public spaces (e.g. shelter to provide protection for people during summer). This should be included as a condition of the Development Application.
- The proposed pocket park that adjoins George Lane is an important part of the scheme and should be encoded into the building envelope controls, to ensure it is protected.

Include Conditions of Consent within the next stages of the Development Application that specify public domain treatments to the space, noting that this space could be part of an access route between Scott Street and Terminus Street that will be used by many pedestrians.

- The Panel notes that the separate massing of the hotel on Scott Street (Masterplan Envelope Mixed Use) and the office building to the south (Masterplan Envelope Commercial), the new east-west pedestrian lane open to the sky between these buildings and the “pocket park” at Scott Street and George Lane, as shown in the updated Masterplan reference design, are highly desirable. These massing and public domain strategies enhance the public experience at street level and manage the scale of the new buildings as seen from Scott Street and the new plaza. They also provide a pedestrianised space within the site, sheltered from Scott Street and accommodating foot traffic between the train station and Council. These elements are not contained in the updated Masterplan Envelopes. The Panel recommends that the open-air link and pocket park are incorporated into the envelope approval to ensure an open to sky laneway connection parallel to Scott Street is not lost.
- The panel has no objection to the minor non-compliance of the building envelope (i.e. two-storey street height along Scott Street/Proposed George Lane), given the demonstrated potential performance in the proposed design. The shadow diagrams demonstrate sufficient sunlight will reach the proposed pocket park located on the proposed George Lane.
- The amount of glazing (i.e. to the windows on the towers and library building), particularly given the hot microclimate of Liverpool CBD, is of concern. Explore alternative solutions to reduce heat to the buildings.
- The revised vehicular access strategy is supported, noting that the proposed vehicular entry at the intersection of Scott Street and George Street has been removed, a vehicular entry off Terminus Street has been added, and a vehicular entry from Scott Street (i.e. with an internal share-way street providing basement access) has been included.
- The panel recommends that Council includes conditions on the master plan approval to permit the temporary closure of the proposed share way for major public events. This needs to be captured and preserved via. the Development Application conditions of consent for approval of the master plan.
- It was noted there are great opportunities to include sustainability and regenerative design with the Architecture and Landscape Architecture. The discussion included the exploration of efficient building envelopes (not entirely glazed and appropriately shaded), use of PVC cells, use of onsite electricity generation to provide comfortable spaces for pedestrians AND occupants.
- A thorough and thoughtful exploration of indigenous history and how it may be interpreted and integrated within the development play a key role in future design development. The panel looks forward to this being explored and explained as the design progresses
- The panel outlined wind studies need to be completed to ensure the project provides for a comfortable streetscape and plaza design
- The panel requests that the Terminus Street frontage be developed as visually and physically permeable where possible and that a blank ‘back of house’ approach be

avoided. The panel requests the Architects review the design of the Terminus Street frontage. All public domain frontages around the site need to be resolved and recognised as public spaces, and the same attention that has been given to Scott Street needs to be applied along Terminus Street. The panel recommends preparing a section drawing showing how Terminus Street links through to the mezzanine level of the Council Administration Building. Consider how this part of the site can contribute to the gateway experience for people (including motorists and cyclists) entering the Liverpool CBD from Newbridge Road. Consider incorporating a bold/strong graphic artwork (e.g. similar in significance to the Claire Foxton mural on Bigge Street) or including green walls on the building.

- The panel requests a focus of the next phases of design to be centred on the plaza design and how it interacts with the architecture and streetscape. There needs to be a diversity of spaces, the space must be well resolved, appropriately detailed for durability and amenity, designed for the microclimate of the area addressing year round conditions (hot/cold, sun/shade), an attractor for use and enjoyment and designed to engage with users of all ages and backgrounds. The panel stated the plaza should be a place in almost constant use (an 18 hour a day place). The discussion included potential inclusions such as provision for outdoor digital displays, performance spaces and deciduous tree planting among others, but resolved that all design options need to be considered and developed further.

5.0 OUTCOME

The panel have determined the outcome of the DEP review and have provided final direction to the applicant as follows:

The project is supported. Respond to recommendations made by the panel, then the plans are to be reviewed/approved by Council.