

MINUTES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING

Thursday the 9th April 2024

DEP PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kim Crestani	Chairperson	Order Architects Pty Ltd
Shaun Carter	Panel Member	Carter Williamson Architects
Matthew Taylor	Panel Member	Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:

Costa Dimitriadis	Senior Urban Planner	Ethos Urban
Shandel Fortu	Planning Director	Ethos Urban
Renee Stavroulakis	Urban Planner	Ethos Urban
Nicholas Bandounas	Director	Scott Carver
Andrew Walsh	Senior Associate	Scott Carver
Daniel Brabant	Project Director – Development	Built Development Group
Nicole Wilson	Principal	Arcadia

OBSERVERS:

Amanda Merchant	Panel Support Officer	Liverpool City Council
Melissa Riley	Convenor	Liverpool City Council
Nabil Alaeddine	Principal Planner	Liverpool City Council
Di Wu	Senior Urban Design Advisor	Liverpool City Council
Joe Bell	Director/Partner	Patch Planning

ITEM DETAILS:

Item Number: 1

Application Reference Number: DA-72/2024

Property Address: Civic Place, 40 Scott Street, Liverpool, 40-46, 48, 52, & 64 Scott Street
Liverpool and 306-310 Macquarie Street Liverpool NSW 2170 (School of Arts)

Council's Planning Officer: Nabil Alaeddine

Applicant: Built Development Group Pty Ltd

Proposal: The Amending Concept Application seeks to modify the approved Concept Development Application (DA-585/2019) by change of use to allow for Residential Flat Buildings and Shop Top Housing in the Phase B building envelope and to modify and extend the approved Building Envelope of Phase B building for Liverpool Civic Place.

The proposed changes are to the building envelope of Building B (Not yet Constructed), which was approved under DA-585/2019.

Meeting Venue: Microsoft Teams Meeting

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-72/2024, Civic Place, 40 Scott Street, Liverpool, 40-46, 48, 52, & 64 Scott Street Liverpool and 306-310 Macquarie Street Liverpool NSW 2170 (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**.

The Design Excellence Panel makes the following recommendations in relation to the project:

4.1. Context

- The Panel notes the project has a previously approved development application and Public Domain Plan, and the proposal is to change the use proposed in the approved Concept DA from commercial to residential resulting in substantial changes to the built form arrangement and public domain shown in the reference scheme.
- The project is going to the Liverpool City Council DEP concurrently with the GANSW State Design Review Panel (SDRP) process triggered by the incorporation of the Build-To-Rent typology. As such the Panel has focussed recommendations on the public domain, and continuation of the already completed Civic Place Phase A site.
- The Panel recommends the applicant seek clarity and confirmation on the Design Integrity Process and management of approval of future modifications to ensure a streamlined process for both the applicant and assessors.
- The Panel would recommend that one (1) Design Integrity Panel is established to ensure on-going design excellence and ensure that there is a consistency and continuity of feedback to the Proponent and Design Team. (Note: The Panel has not addressed any of the previous SDRP reports/minutes.)
- The Panel appreciates the applicant's quality of presentation and methodical approach to presenting the information. The applicant's thorough and well researched knowledge of the build to rent typology and current trends is commended.
- A significant amount of new material was presented that was not included in the package submitted prior to the meeting, therefore the Panel were unable to review that additional information in detail. Notwithstanding, some of the commentary in these minutes may be toward issues already resolved in the current documentation. The applicant is commended for bringing the new material to the presentation as it demonstrated significant improvements to the scheme.
- The Panel appreciates the design team's engagement with Connecting with Country and collaboration with WSP Cultural Advisors thus far. The applicant should provide documentation illustrating how Connecting with Country is informing the design, including the continuation of Phase A initiatives into Phase B.
- The Panel notes the previously approved public domain plan is designed for different uses (retail and commercial) and is several years old. The applicant is not expected to revert or emulate the previous plan. The revised scheme presents the opportunity to improve on the previous scheme and while there are aspects that require further

resolution as outlined in these minutes, these are considered design development modifications and major changes are not anticipated.

4.2. Built Form + Scale (including public domain)

- The Civic Place Phase A Public Domain has been designed and delivered at a class A standard, with elegant resolution of the building entries, circulation and landscaping resulting in a highly successful, quality, civic space that has lifted the design standard in the Liverpool CBD. The result is a civic space that is highly regarded and an integral part of the city image of Liverpool as a vibrant and innovative place, and any compromise of this space will be detrimental to Liverpool as an important city entity. The Panel recommends the applicant provide a revised public domain plan demonstrating consistency and continuity with the ground floor plane of Phase A and how it seamlessly continues and enhances the public domain. A collaborative meeting with the Phase A Landscape Architect and Architect is encouraged. Consideration should be given to retention of the entire row of trees within Phase A as the row is an integral part of the landscape concept for the whole of the precinct and forms an important scaling vegetative element.
- The civic space is being compromised by the residential building's footprint impact at ground level. The public domain is lacking a level of generosity which was present throughout the previous approved public domain plan. The applicant is recommended to review the geometry at ground floor and incorporate more generosity in circulation, frontages and useable public spaces to align with the approved public domain plan.
- The applicant is encouraged to design develop refinements to the public domain with consideration of solar access, active frontages, landscaping, and enhancement of the newly developed Phase A existing civic character of the public domain.
- The corner of Scott Street and George Lane including the thru-site link entry creates an opportunity for a celebrated point of arrival. Currently it appears to be a slightly wider footpath and not an entry space for the north-east section of the precinct. The Panel recommends the applicant demonstrate an emphasis of the public domain design at the corner, through creating a strong, secondary civic space and improving the articulation of the thru-site link. The Panel suggests that options be considered for removal of the small retail space as noted below, or it be made more substantial to improve the urban design response in achieving the recommendations above.
- The thru-site link geometry is currently presenting as constrained, ineffective and creating a floating, ambiguous retail block that poorly addresses Scott Street. While the change from an east-west link to a diagonal connecting to the corner in the current scheme could be an improvement, the applicant is recommended to review the geometry to achieve a stronger, more generous and purposeful thru-site link (for example could this thru-site link be double height). Design resolution around the retail block edges, active frontage and better suited form should be investigated.
- The thru-site link will feel confined to be in, with the 4m high floor to ceiling and narrow width. The applicant should increase the generosity of the thru-site link by substantially increasing the height and width beyond the commercial minimums. Street tree planting in this area is also considered sub-optimal.

- The Panel recommends the applicant demonstrate further design consideration and resolution along the prominent interface between the residential lobby and civic space.
- The Panel recommends the applicant increase floor to floor heights for the residential component to 3150- 3200mm to be in keeping with current trends in the industry and the Design & Building Practitioners Act (DBPA).
- The Panel suggests commercial space be incorporated (or at the least be safeguarded) in the lower floors of the tower to enhance the civic character and address privacy and amenity concerns between buildings. The vision for Civic Place is envisioned to be a predominantly commercial precinct. To keep this character the Panel understands it is council's preference for incorporation of some commercial uses which the Panel sympathises with.

4.3. Density

- The Panel commends consideration of the reduction of one level of basement from the previous scheme, resulting in reducing the volume of car parking.

4.4. Sustainability

- There is no deep soil provided in the proposal, and while there was no deep soil in the previous DA, the new DA creates an opportunity to improve on the previous development. The Liverpool CBD experiences high temperatures due to the urban heat island effect and urban tree canopies play a key role in ameliorating temperature change. The applicant is recommended to seek opportunities to incorporate deep soil for the trees throughout the ground plane – deep soil, tree canopy and meaningful sustainable landscape is considered a fundamental part of any Design Excellence approach.

4.5. Landscape

- The drawings submitted showed removal of a row of four crepe myrtles, however the presentation on the day of the Panel's review showed three of these reinstated. The Panel commends the applicant for retaining these three trees in the proposal. However, the geometry of the planting has been compromised and results in a less than optimal result.
- The approved public domain plan consisted of an eleven-tree arrangement of crepe myrtles that have already been planted as mature trees, are well established and play a key role in the success of the public domain. Significant consultation has taken place to arrive to this arrangement and species selection. The Panel does not support any changes to these existing trees and all 4x crepe myrtle trees (i.e. along the boundary of Phase A and Phase B) should be retained. Note the presentation illustrated 12 trees when there is only 11 in the approved public domain plan and planted; the applicant should update to the correct quantity on revised plans.
- The removal and replacement of the crepe myrtles for a different species is not supported. The Panel encourages the applicant to explore many other opportunities for

incorporating Connecting with Country initiatives. The Panel raises significant concerns for the suitability of the suggested angophora tree to be able to grow in this location.

- The approved public domain plan's interface between Phase A and B was well-considered. The generosity around the eleven trees was a vital characteristic which should be retained in the current proposal. The built form abruptly interfaces at the ground, resulting in the removal of the eleventh crepe myrtle and is far too close to the tenth crepe myrtle. The Panel does not support this poor outcome, and recommends the applicant modify the relationship between the built form and ground floor plane to enable the retention of all trees, with generous space including seating, around them.
- The loading dock size significantly contributes to the large built form at ground. Current trends in build-to-rent projects show furniture and appliances are typically provided therefore the loading demands for residents is reduced compared to build-to-sell developments. The Panel recommends the applicant investigate reducing the size of the loading dock, enabling a 'slimming' of the footprint of the building and for more generosity to the ground floor plane, public domain and trees.

4.6. Amenity

- The improvements to the residential tower floorplans including rearrangement of lifts, openings at the end of the corridors and resulting improved definition of the tower's built form is commended in principle, however this was new material and the Panel have not reviewed in great detail. The applicant is to provide a full set of updated drawings at the next DEP/SDRP. The panel urges that all ADG requirements are met.
- The Panel recommends detailed analysis be done and shared with future Panels on the setbacks & separation distances between this proposal, Phase A and the future development east along Scott Street. Whilst it is understood that residential and commercial uses can happily co-exist (one usually is not home/at work when the other is) visual privacy will need to be a key consideration if separation distances are to be within ADG minimums. Noting the resulting design resolution cannot compromise sunlight and amenity in the process.

4.7. Safety

- The public domain open space between Phase A and B, located at the heart of Civic Place with northerly orientation is a prime location for a successful public space for this precinct. For both the old DA and proposed scheme, the shared driveway is going to experience significant traffic movement and will most likely operate as a road rather than shared-way, significantly compromising the useability of the public space and success of the entire precinct. The Panel fully understands that entrances and exits from Terminus street have been denied (which is disappointing), however any approach for the applicant to reinvestigate and coordinate with Government stakeholders, for a second entrance that alleviates some traffic from the public domain & civic space would be very much supported.
- The Panel has concerns for the urban condition, public domain and pedestrian safety for the Terminus Street side of this proposal. Little information was provided for the design

of this area. The Panel notes the future success of this design will only be achieved with a successful urban design and public domain response to Terminus Street (noting, no street should ever be left behind in any proposal).

4.8. Housing Diversity + Social Interaction

- NSW has a different (and usually higher) standard of design, amenity and environmental conditions to other states, especially when considering apartment design and amenity. The applicant is encouraged to seek build-to-rent precedents from NSW only as examples of good practice and successful design.
- Whilst the Panel was unable to review the new presentation material, the communal spaces should be adequate for a build-to-rent development. The applicant is encouraged to provide greater diversity of communal spaces dispersed throughout the tower.

4.9. Aesthetics

- Whilst noting it is the early stages of the design the Panel is supportive of the architectural resolution of the built form, including the building alignments and relationship to the Phase A buildings, rounded edges and materiality proposed. If curved glazing is proposed it needs to be delivered (and not value-managed out). Should this be unfeasible (due to cost and current supply issues) it should be designed as faceted glass from the outset, or a new design proposed.
- The Panel requires the applicant provide drawings demonstrating how the development addresses the Terminus Street frontage and public domain.

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.