

Design Excellence Review of Revised Proposal: Oriental Hotel & Woolworths Springwood Town Centre



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Background and reference documents.

The following documents have been referred to in preparing this document:

- Amended Architectural Plans.PDF
- Amended Landscape Plans.PDF
- Amended Sustainability Report.PDF
- Design Excellence Report.pdf
- RFI response letter from planner.PDF
- Panel briefing record - 28 July 2025.pdf
- BMCC Public Domain Technical Manual
<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/PublicDomainTechnicalManual-Urban.pdf>
- Diagram showing possible extension to hotel (correspondence with BMCC) refer to Appendix 1

Consultation.

An online meeting with Alex Williams and Addison Boykin was conducted 12-1pm on 30 July to clarify matters in drawings, hotel expansion, scope of works in public domain and

An online meeting with David Puleo and associate of Nettleton Tribe Architects was conducted 5-6pm on 30 July to clarify design intent and possible improvements to the design.

Executive Summary

This document reports on changes and design development that has occurred since the initial Design Excellence Review dated 20 March 2025.

Many of the matters that were raised in the initial review have been addressed, and the revised design is a significant improvement in terms of public amenity and relationship to the town centre.

In my opinion the proposal has the *potential* to achieve design excellence with further design development that should give consideration to the recommendations.

Significant improvements have been made to the design since the Panel meeting that contribute to 'design excellence':

- Composition, materials and articulation of the Raymond Road façade and frontage
- Accessible pedestrian link from Macquarie Road to rooftop carpark
- Pedestrian stairs and 24-hour lift access from Raymond Road
- Extensive planter boxes and proposed planting scheme in particular the trees proposed along the entry driveway and in the north east corner of the hotel outdoor seating areas, noting that the appropriateness of species, microclimate and soil volumes need to be checked.
- Removal of crepe myrtles and commitment to the construction of footpath on eastern side of Raymond Road

Matters requiring further attention

The Record of Briefing of the Sydney Western City Planning Panel held on Monday, 28 July 2025 noted the issues of concern to Council. I agree that these are the main issues that need to be addressed and in the interests of consistency, I refer to these as the basis of review as follows:

- further improvements to / widening of the pedestrian link within the site with associated requirement for removal of 3 roof-top parking spaces; and
- further consideration of the pedestrian crossing / footpath design / intersection treatment outside the main entry on Raymond Road to improve pedestrian experience and safety.

In relation to the first, the possibility of removing 3-5 spaces and replacing these with spaces along the eastern boundary was discussed with Nettleton Tribe. The replacement spaces could be located beneath the condenser deck that could be on a structure above and moved northward to minimise the visual impact on David Road and to align with the bulk of the adjoining Hub.

Recommendation 1: investigate relocation of 5 spaces to increase distance from existing hotel.

In relation to the second, although the modified design is far superior to that originally proposed, further resolution of levels, stairs and ramps is required and the overall design should be simplified to remove clutter. Whilst it is understood that the proposal is confined to the site boundaries, this results in a sub-optimal outcome and the work in the public domain (council land) and on site works should be designed as a integrated whole.

There is a lack of clarity in the current documentation and response to RFI response (item 14) as to who will be responsible for the design and delivery of work in the public domain, although the commitment to funding the works by the proponent is clear.

Recommendation 2: clarify process for coordination, design, delivery and funding of works in the public domain and interface with on site works.

Refer to diagram in Appendix 1.

Council also identified the following additional issues:

- the impact of the design on any ability to relocate intrusive hotel elements in the future;
- the adequacy of the proposed planters and likely future success of the proposed plantings; and
- the proposed covered seating areas on Macquarie Road.

In relation to the first, a sketch (Appendix 2) was provided to Council. This shows the new structure less than 2metres away from the southern façade of the existing hotel.

In relation to the second, the planters appear small for the proposed tree species that are generally strongly supported.

Recommendation 3; review the species selection and determine optimal soil volumes, consider microclimate including strong southerly/ south westerly winds and irrigation requirements.

In relation to the third the covered structures in front of the hotel partially obscure the view of the heritage facade and being fully roofed, are not open 'pergolas'. The design has the effect of extending the built form far closer to Macquarie Road than the existing building.

Recommendation 4: reduce the area of pergolas, make the structures true ‘pergolas’ establish a single alignment parallel with the existing bar façade and pull back from east and west to allow for growth of *Nyssa* in the east and views to the hotel façade in the west.

In addition to the issues identified at the Panel Briefing, the following matters require further attention:

1. The proposed planting scheme is supported but requires more detail and certainty in relation to soil volumes, watering and microclimate. Soil volumes for specified species, in particular *Nyssa sylvatica* appear inadequate for the species to achieve optimal mature form (a rule of thumb would be 50m³ for this species). The artist’s impressions and architectural plans do not show the row of *Nyssa* along the driveway but these should be considered an essential component to provide shade and to soften and screen the intrusive parts of the hotel at the eastern end. The outdoor seating area should be reduced at the eastern end beside the drive way and fronting Macquarie Road to ensure adequate soil volume.
2. Dimensions of planter beds throughout should be checked for the species proposed
3. The resilience of *Magnolia grandiflora* needs to be checked in the proposed exposed location
4. Stormwater collection, treatment and harvesting for irrigation should be included in the design
5. Detailed levels and interface with public domain at Raymond Road crossing need to be resolved and refined with the aim of reducing the complexity and increasing the dimensions of the pedestrian area immediately adjacent to the crossing
6. The extent and design of the ‘pergolas’ fronting Macquarie Road needs revision. These are not ‘pergolas’ as it has become apparent that these are structures with continuous roofs. The stepped plan is awkward and the western extent obscures the original section of the Oriental Hotel façade.
7. The ‘sustainability report does not represent ‘excellence’ at this DA stage more specific commitments are required in particular:
 - a. Materials; there is no commitment to materials with low embodied carbon/energy- (reference is made to ‘NABERS embodied emission material form’ but this was not part of the documentation provided for review.) Mention was made of commitment to low-VOC materials without details.
 - b. Biodiversity and “improved ecology” (ESD 2.,6); It is not clear how the selected species and landscape design contribute to ‘biodiversity and management of water flows through the site’
 - c. WSUD; no details of the stormwater system, harvesting, treatment or reuse have been provided. It is not clear from the documentation how “Benefits associated with using gardens and landscaping as part of the stormwater management strategy include the reduction in water pollution entering downstream receiving waters, flood mitigation in surrounding areas, nutrient supply to plants, groundwater reserve replenishments and the promotion of biodiversity across the site.” (section 2.5.2 ESD report), will be achieved in the development. Given the proportion of impervious surfaces, it is unlikely that the extent of planter beds would have any material effect on downstream flooding.
 - d. Energy efficiency; no benchmarking or strategies to have been indicated to achieve better than compliance with NCC

- e. Cool roofs; a previous suggestion in the first review that the development include shade structures that could also incorporate photovoltaics has not been adopted. Nettleton Tribe advised that this was primarily due to concerns that such structures would be a safety hazard for the delivery trucks using the roof top car park for manoeuvring. It would be a simple matter to design such shade and PV structures to be well clear of the truck sweep paths. The claim in the ESD report that having a concrete rather than bitumen roof is a significant improvement is a tenuous claim at best and the reference to shading is not evident in the design.
- f. Energy efficiency and generation; the ESD report claims that 'the energy load of the facility will be significantly reduced' without providing analysis or evidence. There is no evidence of intent to 'integrate onsite generation where possible' (ESD 2.2)
- g. EV charging points; (ESD 2.7.2); there is no indication of EV charging points on the amended plans.

Recommendation 5: The proposal should define benchmarks and make firm commitments to improved practice in order to exhibit design excellence in relation to environmental performance and ESD. Notwithstanding the lack of detail, the design has the potential to achieve design excellence and should be required to do so in some if not all of the matters outlined (a-g) above.

The potential to remove the intrusive elements of the hotel from the Macquarie Road frontage has been a matter of interest and concern since the first application was made in 2020. It would be desirable for a number of options to be explored to show how the hotel could be extended by directly abutting the southern façade, alternatively by increasing the separation distance, considering both one and 2 storey forms and the possibility of included weather protection for the east west pedestrian link.

Recommendation 6: The proposal should give further consideration to how the hotel could be extended at the rear to remove the intrusive parts on Macquarie Road better reveal the parts with heritage value.

Basis of review: Design Excellence Considerations

The design achieves or has the potential to achieve design excellence in relation to the matters for consideration as follows:

BMLEP2015 sets out the matters that **must** be considered. The matters that are relevant to this review are identified in **bold italicised underlined font** as follows:

(a) whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing **appropriate to the building type and location** will be achieved,

Achieved

(b) whether the form and external appearance of the development will **improve the quality and amenity of the public domain**,

Achieved subject to the clarification of responsibility and coordination for the design, delivery and funding of works in the public domain outside the site boundaries.

(c) whether the development detrimentally impacts on view corridors, (not relevant- no impact)

(d) whether the development detrimentally impacts on any land protected by solar access controls established in the Blue Mountains DCP, (not relevant- no impact)

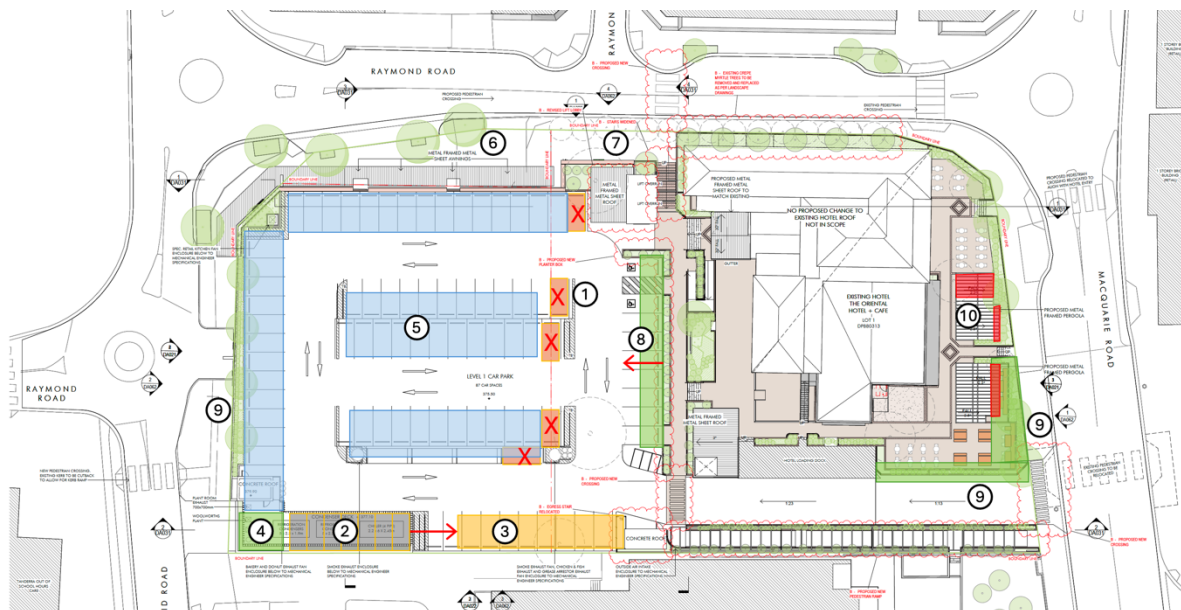
(e) the requirements of the Blue Mountains DCP, (not part of this review, will be addressed in overall assessment)

(f) how the development addresses the following matters—

- (i) the suitability of the land for development, (not relevant)
- (ii) existing and proposed uses and use mix, (the uses and mix are a continuation of existing uses, at issue may be the quantum of development and the impacts that result)
- (iii) heritage issues and streetscape constraints,
- (iv) the relationship of the development with other development (existing or proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form,
- (v) bulk, massing and modulation of buildings,
- (vi) street frontage heights,
- (vii) environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity,
- (viii) the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development,
(matters v, vi, vii, viii are considered of lesser importance than other matters in relation to “excellence”, but comment will be provided.)
- (ix) pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements,
- (x) the impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain.

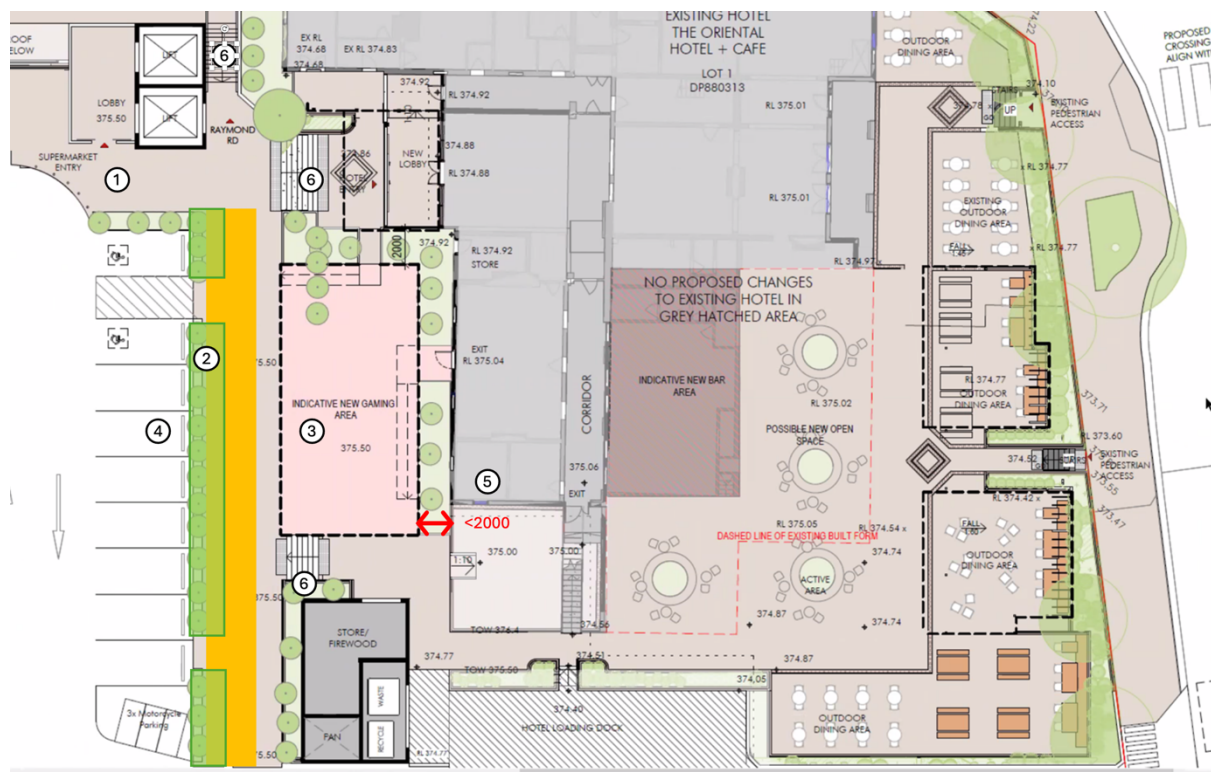
Achieved with the exception of (iii) heritage which deserved further consideration as outlined in Recommendation 6, (vii) which requires further consideration and development as outlined in Recommendation 5,

Appendix 1 Diagram of major recommendations



1. relocate 5 spaces to increase space behind hotel, also to keep exhausts well clear of sweep paths
2. replacement spaces (7)
3. raised condenser deck car parking below
4. potential planter box
5. investigate shade and PV structures clear of sweep paths
6. clarify coordination , design and delivery of public domain
7. simplify and coordinate design of entry stairs, ramps and planters with the aim of increasing area for pedestrians leaving pedestrian crossing
8. Move parking spaces southward and increase are available for hotel extension consider weather protection for pedestrian way
9. Review species selection and significantly increase soil volumes for proposed species (Nyssa supported)
10. Reduce area of 'pergolas', make true 'pergolas' and pull back from west

Appendix 2 Diagram of possible extension.



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| 1. Increased area and roofing outside supermarket entry | 4. Spaces moved south |
| 2. Potential for larger planter boxes | 5. Potential to increase separation or consider joining |
| 3. Potential increase in area for hotel expansion | 6. Review number of risers required |