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Culture Statement

173-179 Walker Street, North Sydney

Prepared by Avenor Pty Ltd

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Artists impression of proposed concept design (Kannfinch Architects)

Creating an enriching and sustainable cultural environment

Avenor prides itself on its commitment to creating world class public spaces and for closely recognising, involving, integrating, and engaging the built environment. One of the core philosophies behind this project is that the proposed tower should not turn its back on the surrounding landscape and community, but rather embrace its local context.

We place great value on developing a seamless interface with the surrounding environment, ensuring that external site boundaries are broken down and activated so the tower can sit comfortably within its context, strengthening North Sydney's identity as a vibrant core of a global city, while being conscious and respectful of its inclusion in an established inner city area with a rich history.

Our proposed concept plan includes the dedication of 1,515 m² of gross floor area to Council to be utilised for community facilities, as defined by the North Sydney LEP 2013 in addition to the dedication of publicly accessible 865 m² by way of an easement-in-gross of landscaped open space, comprising the street level park and lower level landscaped open space for use by the public.

We are conscious that without the careful consideration of the public that the proposed tower may be seen as a large built form element in the local context. By providing public open space and a community centre for potential recreation, artistic, and cultural uses, our design principal has been focused on opening the building as a public asset that embraces the community rather than creating a closed or private building. By increasing the public domain by 895 m², we believe this proposal offers a significant public benefit to compliment the Ward Street Precinct Masterplan and meet the cultural objectives of North Sydney Council as outlined in the North Sydney 2017 Arts Cultural Plan, and the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023.

Enhanced Connectivity and wellbeing through a connection with nature

The public domain offered through the publicly dedicated landscaped open space will be a living ecosystem that brings water, soil, vegetation, microclimate, and materials together to create an

experience for people that is underpinned by a rigorous approach to sustainable outcomes. We are doing this to enhance creativity and well-being as an enabler and extension of the recreation and breathing space of the North Sydney CBD.

The development of 173-179 Walker Street is an unprecedented opportunity to build on and enhance the existing strengths of North Sydney centre, and compliment the strategic objectives for future development.

A landscaped public space on the North of the site, opening on to Walker Street and the proposed community centre, will support a range of diverse activities and user groups including the potential for public entertainment, art projects, and gatherings. This concept design can provide amenity to both residents, workers, and visitors in North Sydney in addition to future building residents.

Enabling Public Art Exhibition, Cultural Expression and Experiences

Spaces to exhibit temporary artworks and installations are limited in the North Sydney area and was listed in the North Sydney Arts & Cultural Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015 as a priority. The North Sydney 2017 Arts Cultural Plan identified a lack of exhibition spaces in North Sydney, and the need to investigate opportunities for more accessible and affordable long term exhibition and creative spaces as well as developing partnerships with the business sector in the provision of creative spaces.

It is intended that the provision of 1,515m² of public open space on Walker Street as part of this proposal creates an opportunity to create both an indoor and external exhibition space for the presentation of high quality public art in North Sydney. This proposal can also assist in facilitating the objectives of the North Sydney Public Art Trail initiated in 2014 by North Sydney Council, thereby enhancing the cultural identity of North Sydney, defining a sense of place, as well as placemaking, wayfinding, cultural development, cultural tourism and economic development.

Community facilities provided as part of this proposal can also provide space that can be offered at no or little cost to arts groups, community organisations for performances, exhibitions, rehearsals,

indoor sports or recreational activities, meetings, or gatherings. The accessible and large floor area of the proposed public open space is intended to be highly adaptable and flexible for future community needs and may suit a variety of alternative and complimentary uses. This will contribute to the cultural expression and range of experiences offered in North Sydney for residents, while providing recreational and cultural outlets that compliment economic activities in North Sydney CBD.

Neighbourhood Public Open Space

The public domain in the area between McLaren Street, Berry Street, Miller Street and the Warringah Freeway consists almost entirely of footpaths, streets and laneways. The surrounding precinct contains no public open space, barring a small landscaped seating area at the southern edge of the Ward Street Car Park adjacent to Bullivant Lane. This area measures approximately 20 square metres. Given the nature of the built form, vegetation and public recreation space is limited. This was identified as part of the Ward Street Precinct Masterplan study.

The proposed north-facing public open space is intended to breathe new life into the precinct's eastern edge through the creation of a new high quality urban oasis with good solar access. Retention of the site's topographical changes and the inclusion of gully forest vegetation to the east provides a visual and acoustic break in the urban landscape that reflects a spatial transition from the lower scale terrace housing on the North side of Hampden Street to the high density residential developments on Walker Street.

Broader connections are established through the proposed site through link, creating an active transport link to key destinations such as St. Leonards Park. Via the planned Harbour View Promenade. This through-site link will provide permeability and connectivity for residents and commuters through benefits to both pedestrians and cyclists, improving access to Victoria Cross Metro Station and creating access pathways envisaged by the Ward Street Precinct Masterplan.

Resilient and sustainable design

The team has developed a concept design heavily influenced by resilient and sustainable design principles. Resilience and sustainability are central to the project's design, construction, and future

uses. We believe that these qualities are important to creating a long term cultural asset. This approach will be supported by world leading sustainability practitioners, to deliver this tower as the newest community hub and benchmark in sustainable residential living.

The following cultural principles and targets have been identified as fundamental to project planning:

- **Diversity and Social Inclusion** – Creation of a space that compliments the precincts unique history and that contributes to healthy, prosperous and resilient lifestyles for residents and the local community.
- **Enduring Economies** – Supporting the role and function of North Sydney CBD as an emerging globally competitive economic hub that encompasses emerging knowledge sectors and attracts talented individuals and the generation of new ideas.
- **Connectedness** – Creating a space that works with the current and proposed community members. Optimising connectivity, inclusivity and productivity through physical and social interaction with the wider North Sydney community. The proposed community space and public open space can engage and connect communities through placemaking while promoting an active and diverse street life, including markets, street parties and fairs, in line with the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023.
- **Heritage and Culture** – Enhancing the built environment and compliment local character and heritage through high quality architectural and landscape design outcomes and integration of possible public art and cultural activities.
- **Built Environment** – Provide an energy and water efficient building that draws upon cutting edge sustainable design standards. Creates a carbon neutral building that incorporates the potential for optimised recycling. Reduce construction and operational waste and divert from landfill to the greatest extent feasible.

- **Provide Creative Spaces & Opportunities** – Provide opportunities for long term accessible exhibition and creative spaces that generate and support cultural activity. Creative expression promotes a better understanding of self, relaxation and sense of Wellbeing. The provision of community space can therefore provide both tangible and non tangible public benefits to the quality of life for residents.
- **Providing Opportunities for Public Art Exhibition.** Facilitating the presentation of high quality public art in North Sydney, ensuring a commitment to excellence, innovation and diversity, as well as enhancing and enriching the visual experience, sense of civic identity and liveability in North Sydney. This objective can support the North Sydney Council strategy to Implement and promote a diverse range of arts and cultural programs and local arts facilities as part of the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023.
- **Supporting an Active and Healthy Community.** Providing a range of recreation and leisure activities for people of all ages and abilities through public open space, or the use of dedicated space for recreational activities in line with the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023.
- **Improved Affordable Housing and Accommodation.** Increase housing diversity to meet a range of needs, including older people, people with disabilities, and key workers. Providing a range of affordable housing and accommodation types, important for all ages and lifestyles. These housing options will play a valuable role in attracting and retaining specific population groups and supporting demographic diversity in North Sydney as well as residents and key workers with lower incomes.



Our Vision

Avenor and Oxley propose to deliver a number of community benefits in association with the redevelopment of the site that will be facilitated by the present planning proposal. Through the realisation of an enhanced public realm in the form of a community facility and publicly accessible landscaped open space this proposal can enhance and enrich the cultural and recreational life of North Sydney Council, enhancing quality of life, creating resilient development outcomes, while assisting North Sydney Council achieve the objectives of the North Sydney 2017 Arts Cultural Plan, and the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023.

This Culture Statement is submitted to Council for your consideration. We welcome the opportunity to meet with Council to discuss this vision in association with the proposed concept design and Letter of Offer to Enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement for 173-179 Walker Street, North Sydney.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Clemesha".

Peter Clemesha,
Director, Avenor

For and on behalf of Walker Street No. 100 Pty Ltd