

25 May, 2017

Attention: Paul Atree-Williams

D.R. Design (NSW) Pty Ltd
12 Argyle Place, Millers Point NSW 2000.

Re: Henry Street, Penrith

Dear Paul

Further to Council's comments with regard to the above planning proposal. I note the following below.

Council's Comment:

- The proposed curtilage around the heritage item is extremely limited. This needs to be expanded on east, west and northern sides. The limited curtilage does not allow sufficient landscaping especially for deep rooted trees. This is significant especially on the northern side where outdoor seating is proposed.

Response:

The revisions substantially enlarge and enhance the curtilage around the Heritage Item. It is noted that the provision of underground parking is not under the Item or its curtilage, but is confined to areas under the proposed new building envelope. This allows for the retention of significant trees within the curtilage and the opportunity for further planting of trees in the deep soil zone.

The curtilage area will also be vehicle-free. This will further enhance the potential for landscape and limited hard surfaces. The Heritage item will form the core to a new soft urban space. It will have a setting that consists of a two storey podium set behind substantial trees.

The Heritage Item will remain separated from the proposed new buildings on the site. No link is proposed, allowing the Item to maintain its autonomy and the allow it to be viewed "in the round".

For a situation where urban development meets a modest heritage building, this is a good outcome. The two and one storey podium will mean that the most immediate built form is of similar scale in height to the Item. Trees and substantial planting will also mitigate this interface. For some time now the site has featured mature trees which have formed part of the setting of the Item. With the removal of the existing modern school buildings this setting can be enhanced with further planting.

Council's comment:

- The two vehicular entry points adjacent to the Heritage Item is considered inappropriate. One entry point, say to the west, would allow a more appropriate eastern curtilage to the Heritage Item.

Response:

The proposal has also to respond to the desired future character of its surroundings. It is proposed that there be a four storey street height along Henry Street. The site is severely constrained in terms of vehicular access from anywhere but on the Henry Street frontage. In noting Council's comments the following is proposed:

- (i) Suitable access to the site is not available from Evan Street and North Street.

- (ii) The vehicular entry is to be located at the western boundary of the site on Henry Street, this is as far away from the item as is possible.
- (iii) The podium section above the vehicular entry is four storeys to match the anticipated street wall height of the property to the west. This street wall height will become two storeys as a transition from the four storey street wall to form the lower scale backdrop to the Item.
- (iv) No drop off or other intrusive traffic management is proposed in front of the Item.

Council's comment:

- The podium proposed needs further consideration, so there is cleared backdrop to the Heritage item. The language of the podium should also be better defined between the podium and the high rise above it.

Response:

The podium has been revised to be 2 storeys in the area surrounding the Item. As the podium is only in Planning Proposal form, its further resolution could include a façade treatment that creates a series of vertical elements of similar proportion to the school building. There could also be breaks in the façade to further modulate it and create a scale in that would allow retained and new trees to dominate the curtilage and enhance the setting of the Item.

The tower elements could also be set higher above the two storey podium providing an opportunity for recesses under the towers. The shadows created will give a sense of the towers floating above the podium and of separation between podium and tower.

Council's comment:

- The quantum of FSR which is proposed would not encourage the most-appropriate separation between new and old buildings, and also would not encourage stepping of new building forms to provide the most-complimentary backdrop.

Response:

When dealing with modest heritage building set in large developments it is most important that the podium of the development sets the scale for the backdrop of the Item. In this case the podium is one to two storeys. It modulates to four storeys to hold the street front height as is proposed for the rest of the street. The central section, between the two towers is one and two storeys to give the least intrusive backdrop to the Item when viewed from its front elevation.

The additional modulation also minimises overshadowing of the deep soil area to the rear of the Heritage Item allowing trees forming the setting of the Item to flourish.

As noted above the façade of the two storey podium will be carefully proportioned to be sympathetic to the Item. From street level and in vistas along Henry Street, the Item will maintain its streetscape presence.

This proposal does not relate to a set quantum in terms of FSR. This is primarily derived from the height of the two towers. The towers are set back from the podium and the first floor above the podium is recessed to form a shadow line and to give the towers a sense of "floating" above the podiums.

Council's comment:

- The planning proposal is supported by a heritage report which does not identify an appropriate curtilage based upon former playground areas or orientation of entrances to the former school building.

Response:

The revised curtilage seeks to provide a setting to the Item that allows it to be understood “in the round”. As a former school building it would be understood that the area surrounding it would have been a playground. It would also be understood that historically, school playgrounds had minimal landscaping, however it is noted from the 1943 Aerial Map that the setting of the Item to the rear consisted of trees.

Street access to the school building was from a porch on the southern elevation and an entry from the north relating to the playground. The street entry has always been quite close to the front boundary. The rear entry directly opening onto the playground.

The relationship of the front entry to the street is unaffected by the proposal and the entry to the rear has the bulk of the curtilage adjacent to it as it also has the setting of retained and new trees. A similar setting to that of the 1943 aerial Photograph.

Additional measures:

In addition to the above changes, local place names, both aboriginal and European are being researched with a view to their incorporation into appropriate parts of the proposal.

The future use of the school building is still under consideration, but the use will be low key and it is envisaged that it would entail minimal additions to the building. This would allow the building to be appreciated “in the round”.

Conclusion:

The Proposal has taken on board comments by Council’s heritage officer and as such the proposal is offering enhanced curtilage and a setting that comprises the component of the development that is at two storeys and an enhanced backdrop of large trees.

Should you require any further information, please call me.

Yours faithfully,



James Phillips
Director