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| Subject | Waterloo Metro Quarter Over Station Development Addendum to Visual Impact Assessment (Cardno, Final V2, 28 July 2020) [Appendix HH to Environmental Impact Statement] SSD-10440 Northern Precinct | | |
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Introduction

This document provides an assessment of the visual impacts of **design amendments to Building 1** which is the subject of the State Significant Development (SSD) Application (DA) (No. 10440) located within the **Northern Precinct** of the Waterloo Metro Quarter site. This report forms an Addendum to the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) prepared by Cardno (NSW/ACT) Pty Ltd to accompany the SSD.

Background

The wider Waterloo Metro Quarter Over Station Development comprises four separate buildings, a basement carpark and public domain works adjacent to the Waterloo Metro station. Four (4) separate SSD DAs were lodged concurrently and are under consideration by the consent authority (Sydney City Council) for the design, construction and operation of each building in the precinct;

- Southern precinct SSD-10437;
- Basement Car Park SSD-10438;
- Central precinct SSD-10439; and
- Northern precinct-SSD-10440.

In summary, the detailed SSD DA for the Northern Precinct sought development consent for:

- 17-storey commercial building (Building 1) comprising Commercial floor space, with an approximate capacity of 4000 workers (now amended to be reduced by one storey – refer below).
- ground level retail tenancies, loading dock facilities serving the northern and central precinct including Waterloo metro station
- landscaping and private open space at podium and roof top levels to support the commercial tenants;
- new public open space including the delivery of the Raglan Street Plaza, Raglan Walk and expanded footpaths on Raglan Street and Botany Road and public domain upgrades; external licensed seating areas; signage zone locations; utilities and service provision and stratum subdivision (staged).

The VIA submitted with the SSD application addressed the relevant (visual amenity impact) conditions of the concept SSD DA (SSD 9393) and the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) issued for the detailed SSD DA (SSD 10440).

The VIA outlined a sound methodology that was informed by an earlier assessment of the visual impacts of the amending concept development application (also prepared by Cardno, July 2020). This involved a process of consideration of established visual assessment criteria, Land and Environment Court planning principles, and identification of key viewpoints through GIS mapping and photomontage analysis. A comparative assessment of close, medium and long distance view impacts of the concept plan envelopes and proposed development compared to the existing situation was undertaken. The VIA noted that the as-submitted proposal was lower than the approved building envelope in bulk and scale, which further reduced what was already considered an acceptable visual impact. The proposed amendment provides lowers the building further.

Overall, the VIA concluded that “contingent on the recommended mitigation measures in this report (ie. implement principles of design excellence for buildings; implementation of an integrated public domain plan with judicious tree planting), the Northern Precinct proposal has been found to represent an improvement in visual impacts in comparison with the approved concept and is considered worthy of support with regard to its effects on the existing visual environment of the site and its locality.”

Modified Proposal

In response to comments and concerns from the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE) on the visual bulk and scale of the proposal, amendments to the design of Building 1 have been undertaken. The key change from a visual impact assessment consideration is that building has been reduced in height by 5.3 metres (at the north west corner) and by one (1) metre at the southern and eastern (lower stepped) portion of the building. This results in the deletion of one (1) storey from the building and a reduction of the floor to floor height. The southern façade has also been extended outward by 600mm.

The building has three new roof heights stepping down from the north-western corner:

From RL 89.4 to RL 84.1

From RL 84.2 to RL 78.9

From RL 71.6 to RL 70.6

Figure 1 below illustrates the proposed amendments to the roofscape of the building.

Figures 2 to 5 are comparative illustrations of the as-submitted design and the proposed lowered building.

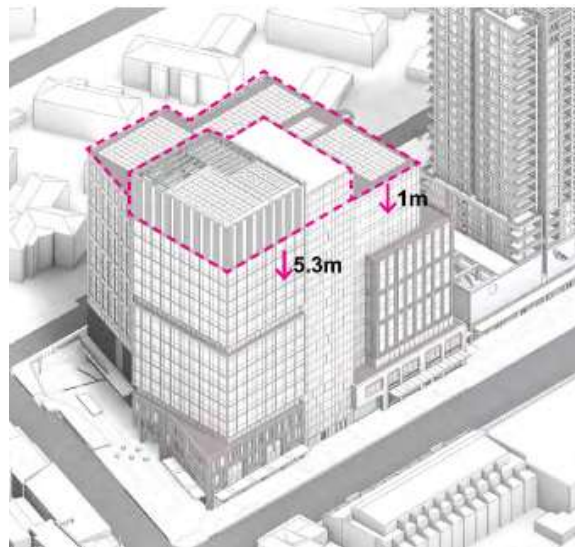


Figure 1: Axonometric View (North West Aerial) indicating extent of Building 1 reduction from the as-submitted development application (Source: Woods Bagot, Indicative only)



Figure 2: Photomontage of view from corner of Botany Road and Cope Street, indicating extent of proposed reduction of building height of Building 1 (right) from the as-submitted design (at left)
(Source: Woods Bagot, Indicative only)

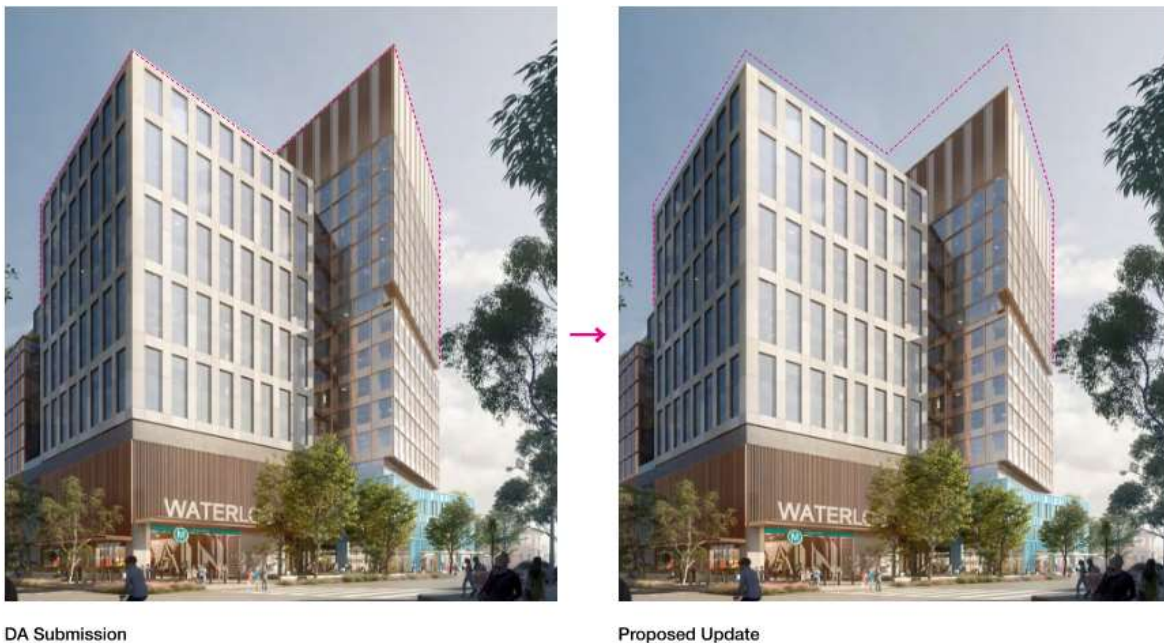


Figure 3: Photomontage of view from Cope Street looking north-west, indicating extent of proposed reduction of building height of Building 1 (right) from the as-submitted design (at left)
(Source: Woods Bagot, Indicative only)



Figure 4: Western elevation (Botany Road) – as submitted
 (Sheet No. WMQ-BLD1-WBG-AR-DRG-DA121 Rev C dated 28/8/20 by Woods Bagot
 Various Building Heights as per Blue Line: Planning Envelope profile: RL 89.4; RL 84.2; RL 71.6



Figure 5: Western elevation (Botany Road) – amended
 Sheet No. WMQ-BLD1-WBG-AR-DRG-DA121 Rev F dated 15/3/21 by Woods Bagot
 Revised stepped Building Heights now: RL 84.1; RL 78.9; RL 70.6 (approximate difference shown in yellow shading)

Visual Impact Analysis

This assessment is limited to the anticipated visual impact from the proposed amendments to the design of Building 1 (overall lowering of building height) from that assessed in the VIA dated July 2020. The VIA established key viewpoints through an established methodology for visual assessment from close, medium, medium-distant and distant views. The same viewpoints have been considered in this Addendum with respect to the amendments to Building 1 within the Northern Precinct.

Close Views and Medium-Distant Views within the Waterloo Estate

As indicated in the comparative analysis at Figures 2 and 3 (photomontages), the building provides an improvement in visual quality in direct views from the north at Raglan Street, Cope Street and Botany Road (viewpoints 1, 3 & 8 of the VIA – refer Figure 6 below). The lowered building height maintains and enhances this. Further information provided by the applicant on the materiality of the building will contribute to this improvement in visual quality when viewed from close by. The extension outward of the southern façade by 600mm has negligible visual impact from the original intended scale.

The VIA identified that medium-distant views of the Building from other viewpoints in the Waterloo area were limited, being: (i) behind other building groups in the precinct (viewpoints 2 and 4), and (ii) almost completely screened by the existing very tall buildings and the substantial stock of tall, forest scale trees within the precinct (viewpoints 5, 6 and 7). Hence the proposed building (lowered even further) will have even less visibility.

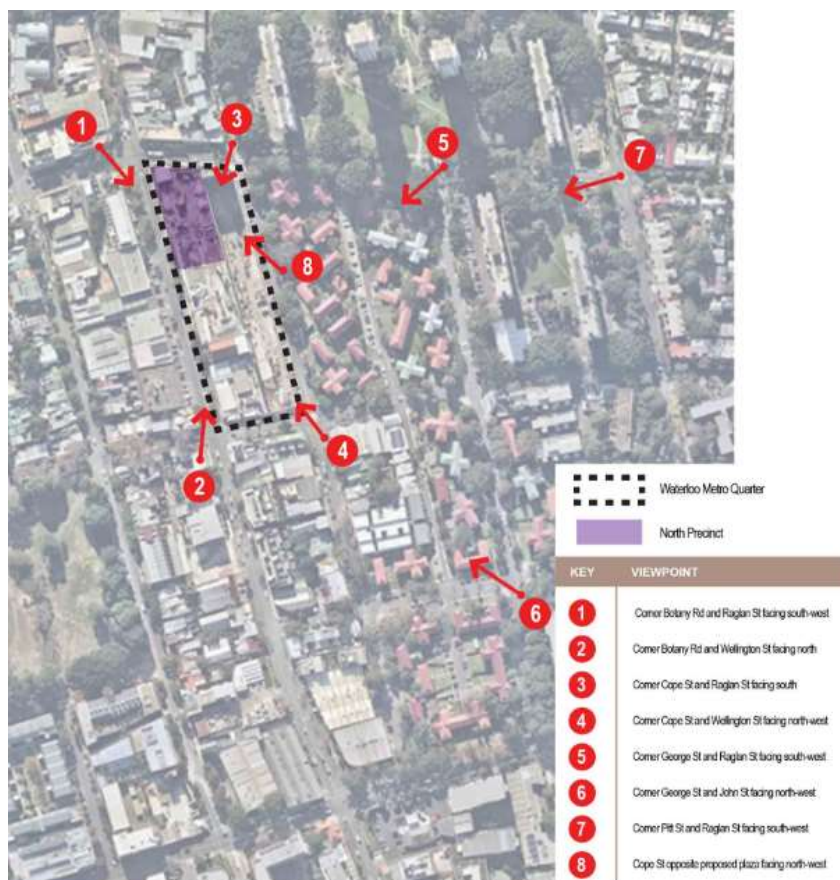


Figure 6: Local Views within the Waterloo Metro Quarter Precinct (Source: Figure 7 of VIA, Cardno July 2020)

Distant and Medium-Distant Views outside the Waterloo Estate

In general, from view points looking towards the Northern Precinct (and greater Waterloo Precincts), visibility is limited by the largely medium density suburban environments in the medium distance (eg. the existing Waterloo towers and residential blocks) which are already prominent visual elements.

The Northern precinct (together with the proposed central and southern precinct buildings) will be visible, and will appear as a consolidated building group substantially screened by residential development and existing large trees, in particular from the various parklands in the broader area: Redfern Oval and Park (north); Waterloo Park (north and south); Alexandria Park, and Sydney Park (viewed from a further distance).

The Northern Tower of the amended concept is visibly shorter and less bulky than the other Precinct towers, which will result in a greater visibility of open sky and an overall improvement to the visual impact than that previously submitted. The further reduction of Building 1 will result in a largely imperceptible change from these distances. Revised photomontages are therefore not considered to be warranted for these viewpoints.

Conclusion

The VIA noted that the as-submitted proposal for Building 1 was lower than the approved building envelope for the Northern Precinct in bulk and scale, further reducing what was already considered an acceptable visual impact. The proposed amendment to Building 1 (reducing the higher points of the building by 1 to 5.3 metres) will result in a lesser impact to close, medium and distant viewpoints.

The overall assessment outcomes, justification and mitigation measures and conclusions of the VIA prepared for the originally-submitted proposal remain valid (and are improved), and the proposed amendments therefore warrant support.