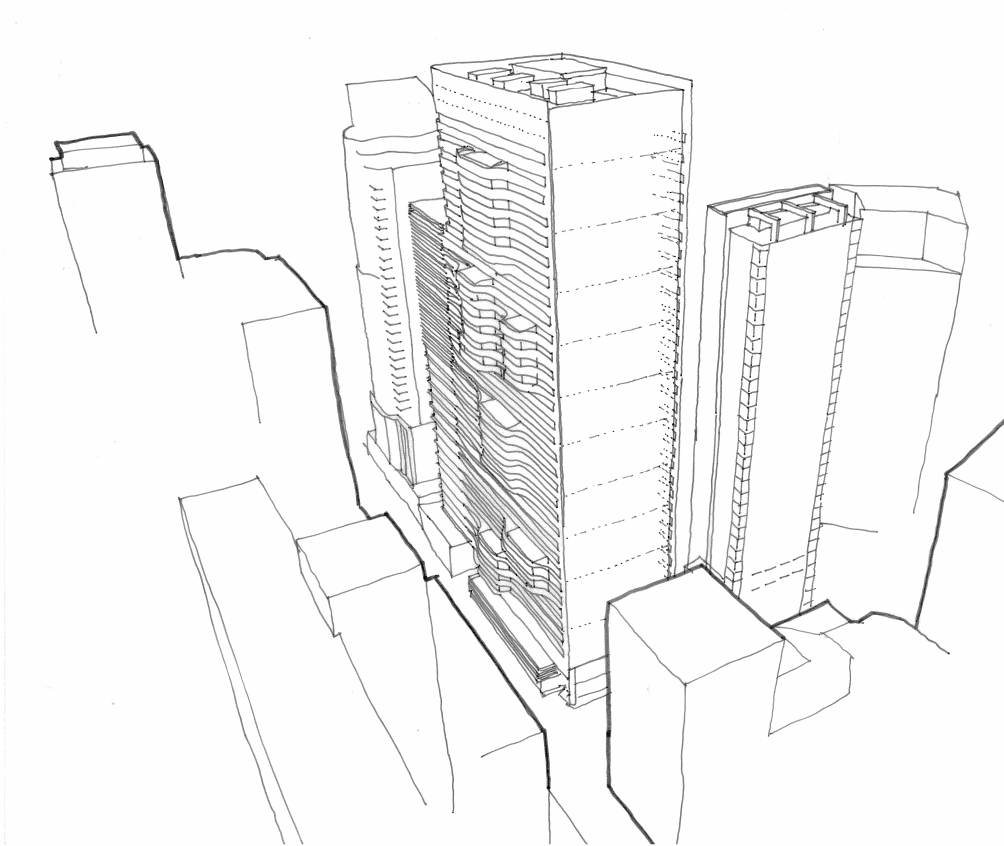




RICE DAUBNEY

88 Walker Street, North Sydney

Design Statement



Part 3A SUBMISSION

April 2009

DESIGN STATEMENT

The 88 Walker Street and 77-81 Berry Street development, known as 88 Walker, is conceived as a major urban renewal project in the heart of North Sydney. It will be a significant development in the CBD environment in terms of people occupying the reinvigorated ground plane of the CBD core and in the wider urban and skyline contexts.

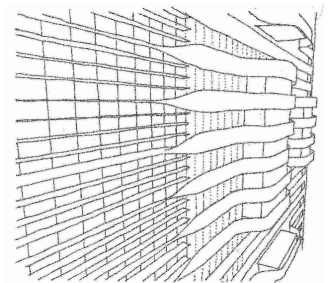
Architectural Concept

The development of 88 Walker Street & 77-81 Berry Street is across two separate buildings with the building on 88 Walker acting as the formal address and entry foyer for both the hotel that sits above it, and the office tower that sits behind on the laneway site.

The ground plane that surrounds and separates the buildings defines three of North Sydney's central laneways and as such offers a unique opportunity for a public domain of significant impact. The proposal to rework traffic movements in order to provide a new pedestrian environment on Denison Street offers a new sunlit gathering space in the heart of the CBD.

The two building forms reflect their function in their external expression. Conceptually the buildings are conceived at two primary scales firstly the macro scale of the skyline where they are both defined as strong simple forms in the heart of the CBD.

The commercial office building is seen as a backdrop building on the skyline due to its lack of a dominant street frontage. As such its form is strong, simple and defined by the external sunscreens that resolve its east-west orientation in order to maximise views and transparency, whilst controlling heat load from the sun. These screens deform around the buildings external wintergardens to give the building a dynamic and activated façade whose legibility and expression changes in response to time of day, shadow and orientation.



The hotel is seen as an elegant, vertically proportioned form split into two blades by both material and alignment. This gives the building a strong environmental response with the northern form being predominantly solid, containing the core, and the southern form being a filigreed glass skin containing the majority of the hotel rooms.

At the other end of the scale the buildings are perceived as additions to the fabric of the ground plane and public realm

where the towers over are less important than the materiality and activation provided at ground plane and on the levels immediately above it. The interaction of bridges, awnings, inverted podiums and new streets will enliven the heart of the CBD. Landscape plays a major role at this scale and helps to define the hierarchy of spaces and places that surround and enrich the development. It is intended to blur the line between public and private by integrating landscape across multiple levels and providing connections through and across the site that make no reference to boundary lines or ownerships. This strategy seeks to maximise the benefit of the buildings to both the public realm and the private spaces.

The Design Proposition

The 88 Walker development is a design solution which balances commerce with the contextual relationships, and the needs of both the building's tenants and the general public.

The design has evolved to include a new pedestrian and vehicular street cutting through the site in an east-west direction linking up with the existing ant track from Walker Street to Miller Street. This reinforces a major pedestrian route through the CBD and offers a unique and pivotal stitch into the existing pedestrian movement patterns of North Sydney.

The hotel building sits on top of a 10m high glazed lobby that reflects the height and form of the neighbouring heritage building the Firehouse Hotel. Above this level the tower sets back from Walker Street to define the curtilage of the neighbouring building and to further define the hotel as a singular element above. The first three floors of the hotel form the rest of the podium to the laneway and house the semi-public functions of the hotel, being conference, restaurant and bar levels with the first of the 200 hotel rooms being on level six.

The commercial building is linked to the street lobby space via a bridge and grand staircase that land in the Walker Street lobby. This bridge connects the buildings not only on the pedestrian route but also architecturally, given the form of the bridge influences the form of the office lobby it intersects with and informs the design of the main wall within that lobby.

The commercial lobby acts as a connector between Spring Street, Denison Street and the new cross street inverting the current inward looking ground plane to orientate both the lobby and the retail spaces that line its western face out to activate the public realm.

To the northern end of the site, beyond the new cross street, the podium building connects and mediates between the new development and the existing Beau Monde residential tower. The podium is two stories and contains retail on ground and a food court on the upper ground level that connects through to the base of the Beau Monde apartment building to link the new cross street with Berry Street to the north. Above the two stories of retail is a roof garden that is both a visual and physical amenity linked to the food court below. This space, together with the roof garden over the lobby facing onto Denison Street, serve to extend the quasi-public domain across the roof of the podium effectively widening the perception of open space at ground level.

The Public Domain

The ground plane is defined by a number of key spaces such as the Denison Street plaza, Spring Street stepped entry and the new cross street. These spaces are all further elaborated upon in the landscape statement by Oculus.

The design extends and integrates the new Denison Street plaza by setting back 3m from the boundary. This serves to broaden the pedestrian plaza and add life and vitality, with external seating and activity generated by the plaza fronting retail to give a real sense of place to a currently non-existent public space. This retail opens up to the plaza creating a blurring of the edge of inside and outside that extends the urban curtilage of the plaza space deep into the building. Additionally the south west corner of the building opens up as a glazed corner forging a connection between the lobby and the plaza.

This space is made possible by the reworking of traffic flows on Little Spring Street creating a two-way flow from Spring Street to the new cross street resulting in the partial closure of Denison Street for the same distance. This two-way flow dictates the removal of parking spaces and the partial widening of the road and footpath zone in Little Spring Street. This widening moves the core and the dominant line of the tower into the site resulting in an additional width to the pedestrian footpath along the western face of Little Spring Street.

An open pedestrian connection, linking Walker and Miller Streets, extends beneath the elevated tower forming a new pedestrian and vehicular street. This street offers the addition of view corridors that previously were blocked by buildings and

makes legible the pedestrian connection between North Sydney's two dominant thoroughfares being Walker and Miller Streets. The nature of this space is further enhanced by the inclusion of a landscaped roof terrace on the two storey building that forms the northern wall of the street and the opening up of the façade below this connecting the level 1 food court to the street environment.

The interaction between the main commercial office lobby and the surrounding street environment happens across multiple levels. The lobby connects in a north-south direction to Spring Street, via the main flight of steps that diminish to deal with the falls along Spring Street, and at the new cross street which is a level connection to the footpath and cross connection to the food court beyond. In an east-west direction the Lobby connects to Walker Street via the bridge over Little Spring Street, which is a full storey below at this point and connects through the lobby café to the Denison Street plaza.

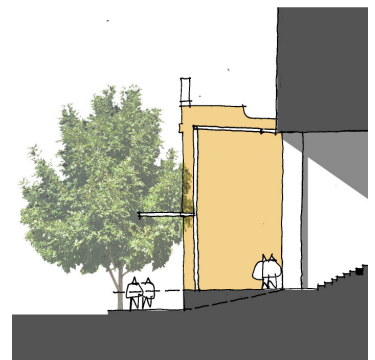
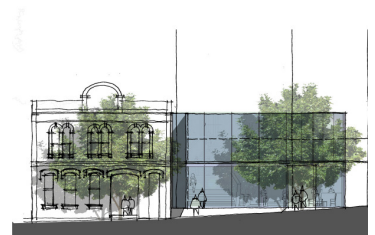
Due to the multiplicity of connections the lobby brings together, the space is seen as an urban stitch that pulls together multiple directions, alignments, levels and architectures to create a strong urban condition. The relationship between the lobby and the external environment is also enhanced by the level 2 roof garden associated with the meeting floor that overlooks the lobby and allows for further natural light to spill into the main lobby volume.

The Hotel Tower

The hotel lobby resides in the main Walker Street lobby space and is defined by the staircases and ramps that guide the interaction of street levels that exist within the space.

The Walker Street elevation of the building sees the level changes of the cross fall on Walker Street expressed in the form of a stone plinth that picks the entry level as its datum and stands forward of the glass line to express an alignment with the Firehouse. The glass line is separated and set back from the plinth by 450mm to give dominance to the firehouse elevation and form.

In addition to this setback from the street alignment the building is also separated from the Firehouse Hotel along Walker Street by a glass spacer or display case that defines a joint between the two buildings and expresses the structural depth of the new tower set back 5m within the lobby. This glass display case is approximately 1.3m across the face on Walker Street by the 5m depth of the tower setback. The



intention of this space is to reveal and display the side wall of the Firehouse Hotel with its sculpted parapet as an urban element on the street with the new buildings glass enclosure removed from it allowing it to stand as a wall on the street. The space in between then forms a display case for a sculptural work described in the Art Statement.

The height of the glass volume on Walker Street picks up on the top cornice line of the Firehouse Hotel allowing the parapet and freeze at the top of the Firehouse Hotel to stand proud again giving the Firehouse Hotel dominance on the street while picking up on strong alignments. The awning that protects the street in front of the new entry and along Walker Street again picks up on a neighbouring alignment and is defined by the first floor cornice line of the Firehouse Hotel.

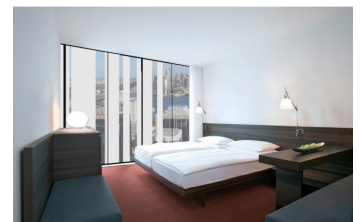
Behind the glass entry lobby the tower form is seen to land in the form of the core on the northern side of the site and to remain elevated on a series of columns along the southern wall adjacent to the Firehouse Hotel.

To the rear on Little Spring Street the lobby volume is recessed to allow for covered drop off and to give some ground plane relief to the street widening the shared zone that is extended from Spring Street around to the rear of the hotel.

Above this double volume lobby the public functions of the hotel work across a three storey glass box, set back 5m from Walker Street, to animate the street with the public activities that occur inside. On the laneway these three floors project to the street alignment helping to define a space on Spring Street that is formed by the setback on the commercial tower and the undercutting of the tower lobby below. The bridge connecting both buildings also helps to form an edge to this space defining the pedestrian dominated spaces of Denison and Spring Streets from the vehicular functions of Little Spring Street north of the hotel.

The 200 hotel rooms are laid out eight per floor with the structural core to the north against the side wall of the neighbouring 100 Walker Street building. The northern form of the building is predominantly solid terracotta panels given its function as both structural and services core for the tower. The rooms that sit on the north-east and north-west corners provide the opportunity to open up this solid element with windows inserted into the pattern of vertical articulated panels on a two floor basis. These windows step on both the north elevation and the two street elevations to allow the reading of individual rooms rather than as a singular element.

The majority of the rooms are orientated to the south, east and west looking across the CBD to the Harbour and City beyond. The southern elevation is a glass skin with an interlayer of white strips that define views from the rooms and respond to the need for privacy and the desire for light and views that typify urban hotel rooms. The interaction of the three different room patterns gives the elevations of the hotel a unique and shifting pattern that is legible as a macro striped pattern or as a room by room design. The south-east and south-west corners are defined by corner windows that orientate on the diagonal towards oblique views. The east and west elevations are formed from an interaction between the patterned and articulated glazed southern form containing the rooms and the more solid terracotta clad northern form that holds the core. These two forms are separated by the corridor which is a simple glass joint separating the two.



The overall impression of the hotel building is as an elegant, vertically proportioned pair of complementary forms that sit well within the commercial CBD context, yet define the alternative use as a hotel. The use of terracotta helps to ground the building, and the respect paid to the neighbouring heritage item sets the ground plane expression for the building as a sensitive and daring infill.

The Commercial Office Tower

The office floor design is driven by tenant flexibility and amenity with large rectangular floor plates maximising natural light and panoramic views in all directions. The core orientation to the east accepts the likely long term aims of the current and proposed planning controls which will see the development of Walker Street into a series of taller buildings that will block or interrupt the views in this direction. It also acknowledges the importance of the new Denison Street plaza and its public significance on the ground plane as an activated and lively public realm.

The tower floor plate is defined by the side core which allows views and natural light from the moment one steps out of the lifts on every floor. The tower plates are consistent for the majority of the tower with the top seven floors stepping back from the northern face to allow for a more articulated urban form.

This split in the building informs the dominant elevation strategy, which is to allow the height to inform a definition of the building into two elements. The lower northern element is defined by a series of horizontal louvres ranging from four per

floor on the top of the west and east elevations down to one per floor on the bottom of these elevations. The taller southern form is defined by a perforated metal screen held 600mm away from the façade that provides sunshading to the east, west and north of this form.

The southern elevation reads as a revealed glass skin held between the two perforated metal blades of the east and west sunscreens. These screens are penetrated at each floor by a slot that extends from 700mm above the floor level to 2200mm above at the top of the building and 2900mm above the floor level at the bottom of the building. These slots define a depth to the façade that allows the glass line behind to be read.

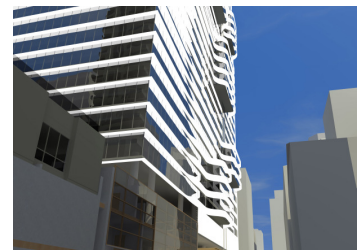
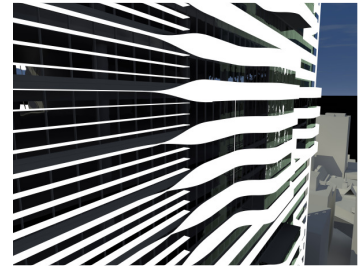
The deviations the screens make add drama and interest to the east and west facades on the main volume. The deviations accommodate the core to the east and the double level winter garden spaces that protrude through the glass in a seemingly random pattern generated by the desire to spread access to the winter gardens across the majority of floors. This macro pattern and the shadows it will create offer a compelling and dynamic backdrop to the buildings that surround the site including the MLC Building to the west.

The horizontal shading devices and the perforated screens, and the shading they offer, allow the glass behind to be a very transparent skin since the glass is not acting alone to counteract the heat of the sun. Thus the façade can be read as a clearer wall promoting a connection between inside and outside, whilst allowing the penetration of natural light onto the floor plate without the heat gain normally associated with high levels of transparency.

The two elements of the tower are united at a joint that sees the vertical screens twist and rotate to form the horizontal blade that occurs at each floor level.

The glass skin of the tower reads as an elegant element without the interruption of columns on the elevation as they are set into the floor plate. This allows the glass to read as a transparent skin behind the veil of the shading devices. This skin is slowly revealed as the eye tracks down the building and the need for the shading devices lessens, seeing them diminish in size or number.

The top of the building is defined by the two vertical faces of the perforated blades that form the taller southern element of the building. These blades sail past the edge of the building hiding the top plant room as they reach towards the sky to end in the single expression of a clearly defined line, giving the



building a unique marker in a sea of existing surrounding buildings.

ESD Strategy

The development responds to the needs of a sustainable world in two ways. The first focuses on what needs can be met at present and the second focuses on how the building can be designed now to meet the needs of the future.

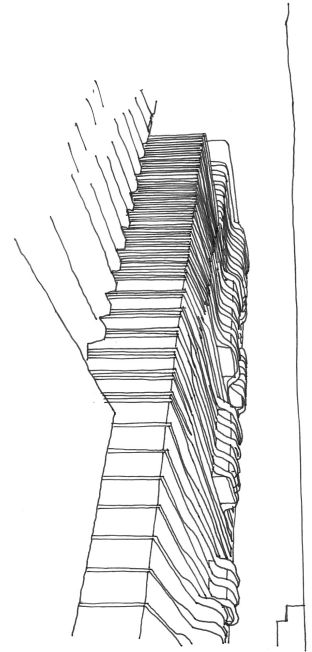
The needs of the present are met through a focus on precinct wide solutions that seek to integrate both the Hotel and Commercial office uses together with the needs of the retail spaces within the podium and the car parking below to optimise the overall performance of the entire development by balancing energy, water and waste demands, peaks and cycles across all uses. This focus beyond the micro has led to a combined chilled water plant located within the basements together with other shared services that optimise adjacencies and load cycles.

The focus is on performance in construction and operation leading to a scheme that includes technologies and strategies such as an innovative façade scheme that aims to limit solar heat gain and direct sun, whilst still retaining good daylight levels on the floor plate and optimising external views thus limiting the amount of energy needed on the floor plate to light and cool the space. Together with an efficient HVAC system for all parts of the buildings this will help to target a high NABERS Energy Rating for the buildings overall and individually.

Blackwater recycling from all uses on the site and potentially beyond in order to provide water for toilet flushing, cooling towers and landscape irrigation.

From an architectural perspective the development will also have a responsible materials selection process that includes the use of low VOC's in all carpets, paints, sealants and adhesives, reduction in PVC throughout the development, sustainable timber selection and recycled steel and concrete where possible.

The needs of the future are being met through the creation of flexibility in the design to allow the building to adapt in the future. This is being achieved in many ways, as an example we have created flexible space planning within the basement areas to allow easy adaptation to the central plant to serve future needs / technologies. Additionally, through designing



flexibility in the facade there is the potential to allow for opening windows and doors to be retrofitted without needing to remove the facade mullions and transoms meaning that the building can adapt to changing climatic conditions, social norms and uses.