



RICE DAUBNEY

# 100 MOUNT STREET Commercial Development

## **Architect's Design Statement**

PPR SUBMISSION

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## DESIGN STATEMENT

100 Mount Street is conceived of as an iconic new tower in the centre of North Sydney's commercial business district.

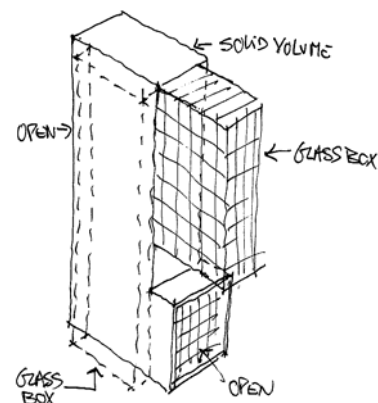
The site, with its prominent position in the North Sydney CBD, is bordered primarily by commercial developments with some retail (Berry Square), residential (Beau Monde) and heritage (Firehouse Hotel and MLC) buildings. In its present state the developed nature of the site takes no advantage of its key position and makes little contribution to public domain or the streetscape.

### The Proposal

100 Mount Street seeks to fill the developable envelope envisaged in the Draft LEP 2009 becoming one of the tallest buildings within the CBD as is appropriate given its location at the very centre of the CBD. The development objective is to provide a building of the highest standard giving North Sydney a new flagship building that suggests a new age for the CBD. It signals a shift from a landscape dominated by B and C grade buildings towards one where the quality of the architecture and office accommodation can rival if not better that of the City of Sydney, lifting North Sydney's reputation for commercial office space. The responsibility this objective puts on the site demands a building of elegance and bravery. The dynamic form the building expresses, to the south and east in particular, responds to this challenge and draws the eye towards the very centre of the CBD where the proposal renews the ground plane with a public domain of the highest quality that gives a positive impact on pedestrian movement within the CBD in particular.

### Architectural Concept

100 Mount Street is defined by a strong simple volume with an expressed core to the north and two cantilevered projections to the east and south that take advantage of the harbour views and give a dramatic presentation to the building. The southern projection softens the broad length of this elevation contributing to an elegant balance of planes and proportions. The eastern projection, which occurs above a double height



sky garden at levels 20 and 21, takes advantage of its slenderness to reinforce the 3.5m cantilever of this facade.

The two 'boxes' on the east (low rise) and west (mid & high rises), with vertical sun shading in a staggered pattern, are like two big windows in the city and represent the two open ends of the main volume.

The overall assembled expression emphasises the building's elegance and slenderness whilst reinforcing the vertical proportions of the tower, a strategy wholly in keeping with its location in the Heart of the CBD, holding a prominent corner position on two dominant North Sydney streets.

## **The Design**

From the beginning the focus has been to create a building that is influenced by and responds to the urban context of its locality. To achieve this, the proposed tower creates a dialogue with its context at both a macro and micro level; from the introduction of the southern pop out to create a slender main façade, to the modulation of the podium building to pick up on the form of the adjoining heritage item, changing its form in a direct response to context, climate and orientation.

The building is conceived as a composition of elements that offer unique responses to specific site conditions. These various elements are unified by their form, colour, materiality, texture and pattern to create a building that is specific to its location.

## **The Tower**

The building has a rectilinear form with a regular structural logic that broadly responds to primary site conditions of shape and scale, establishing the buildings macro form. The 'rigidity' of this form is then manipulated by adding a series of elements that respond to more specific site conditions. These elements give the building elegance, sophistication and harmony.

From a distance it is the tower component of the building that has the greatest potential to improve its context. When viewed from the south the rectilinear form of the tower is masked by the glass screen that emphasises the southern projection picking up the street alignment of the MLC Building further up Mount Street. This screen sails past the corners of the projected floorplate to create an element of lightness and transparency

giving the building depth and texture. Because of its southern aspect the glazing of the screen is lighter and clearer, with floor to floor glazing to maximise views towards the harbour and allow interior activity to be read from the street, enlivening the building. This lightness and the proportions of this face are of critical importance in reducing the bulk of the building from this aspect.

When viewed from the east the slender proportion of the cantilevered glass volume, that is the mid and high rise floors of the tower, stands out from the surroundings and gives the building a dramatic reference. This eastern projection is also emphasised by a screen that sails past the corners to reinforce lightness and transparency. This volume was derived from a desire to take advantage of views towards The Heads and to balance this with a response to its orientation; thus its glass is darker and the screen has horizontal sun shades at every floor to reduce solar heat gain.

The cantilevering of this volume is emphasised with the two storey high sky garden, where the eastern face is pulled back to align with the southern projection. The sky garden is the transfer floor for the low and mid rises and its reduced floor plate size offers the opportunity for a special tenant reception floor with a private outside landscaped area.

The western view, above the neighbouring 80 Mount Street, is figuratively a big framed window, with staggered vertical sun shades that modulate the façade, while the north is predominantly defined by a number of vertically proportioned elements that hang off the expressed vertical volume of the core.

The eastern and southern screens are important design elements for the overall form of the building. They extend two stories above the roof and give the building a unique marker in a sea of the existing North Sydney towers. The screens are not only form-givers that define the buildings top; they also provide building naming opportunities.

## **The Public Domain**

When the view changes from the macro scale of the tower on the skyline to the micro view of the pedestrian at the ground, so too does the buildings response to its context; In particular the scale of its detail becomes finer and more subtle. At this level it is the inverted podium and the elements that make it up that are

of critical importance as they play a key role in the unification of the streetscape and the physical enhancement of the pedestrian centre, or heart, of the CBD.

The ground plane around and through the site is dominated by a number of key design decisions, some subtle and others dramatic;

The introduction of a truck hoist allows the loading dock to be located in the first basement removing the physical footprint of the dock from the ground plane but also facilitating all vehicular movements in and out of the site in a forward gear thus minimising any pedestrian / vehicular conflict and increasing pedestrian safety. The dock at basement level also offers greater flexibility for truck and van movements meaning that managing the dock generated traffic becomes easier and thus the impact on the surrounding traffic network, of loading the building is minimised.

The introduction of a thru site link is made possible by the above giving a 4.4m wide double storey connection activated by retail and the commercial lobby. This connection runs on the urban line of Little Spring Street and visually extends it through to

Mount Street offering another pedestrian movement pattern that increases the flexibility of the ground plane and the adaptability of the building to its context. At the Spring Street end the thru site link together with, the Truck hoist door, adjoining plant and retail spaces are unified by the use of a glass art screen wall that allows the rear of the building to be seen as an installation piece to Spring Street rather than a collection of disparate elements.

In a further move aimed at creating a deeper relationship with the area, and to extend the Mount Street Plaza feeling down Mount Street, the proposal aims to substantially widen the footpath zone along the northern side of Mount Street. This will be achieved by setting the ground plane line of the building back 5m from the site boundary, aligning with the adjoining 80 Mount Street and effectively more than doubling the footpath width adjacent to the site. This extends the plaza amenity that exists to the western end of Mount Street down towards Walker Street while still maintaining a balance with the practicalities of vehicular movements. Setting the building back from Mount Street, Spring Street and Walker Street increases the public domain from within the site by some **550m<sup>2</sup>** (including the thru-site link). This allows for the introduction of outdoor dining areas and the enlivenment of the public realm with people places.

The sloping nature of Mount Street has been accommodated by a series of stepped platforms that allow for continuous pedestrian movement alongside the building and under cover for the full extent of the Mount Street elevation heightening the public use of the additional setbacks from the boundary.

Beyond the site boundary the proposed realignment of the parking on the north side of Mount Street and the removal of parking on the south side of Mount Street increases the physical and emotional importance of Mount Street as the dominant pedestrian space within the North Sydney CBD and increases the pedestrian area by up to **410m<sup>2</sup>** emphasising the extension of Mount Street Plaza east towards Walker Street.

In order to open up the corner of Walker and Mount Streets and allow more light penetration into Mount Street the building has been raised five stories in the air with the first commercial floor starting where usually the podium would finish. This big open space lightens the base of the tower and gives 'breathing' space to the adjacent heritage Firehouse Hotel. Two new retail pods along east and west faces of the scheme promote street activation with the lobby and thru site link forming a series of glass boxes in between.

The two storey glass box that defines the retail on the corner of Mount Street and Walker Street is setback from the boundary by approximately 3.8m, increasing the footpath dimension here to 7.5m. This setback allows for an external dining area along the street that will activate Walker Street and increase the footpath dimension at this very busy pedestrian intersection. This setback also helps to reveal the heritage listed eastern face of the adjoining Firehouse Hotel across Spring Street. Thus the setbacks on the ground plane allow the Firehouse Hotel to read as an important heritage object within the evolving context of the North Sydney CBD environment. Additionally the elevational treatment of this building aims to pick up on not only the significant horizontal lines of the heritage item but also the terrace rhythm of the street that the adjoining building implies again grounding the building in its context.

While the podium treatment on the corner of Mount and Walker Streets will provide a contextual relationship with the neighbouring Firehouse heritage item, the columns above express the structural logic of the building and provide a dramatic expression of structural forces to ground the tower. The introduction of a splayed or "W" column arrangement picks

up the structural load of the central tower column on the Walker street façade and splits this load, to be equally distributed to the two corner columns, thus opening up the void space above the podium building and drawing the eye up towards the tower. This structural expression is made further legible through the expression of knuckle and column elements with the cast knuckles that spread and receive the structural load cast as single elements in a textured finish that contrasts with the high class smooth finish of the columns themselves.

### **ESD Strategy**

The building will be as environmentally transparent as possible and is being designed to achieve excellence in environmentally sustainable design principles and outcomes, including targeting a high NABERS energy rating. In achieving excellent ratings, the building will use high performance glass and externally shaded facades, optimised and efficient mechanical systems, recycle rainwater and will minimise the waste that it puts back into the environment through the integration of a strong recycling policy and waste storage areas.