

89 George Street, Parramatta

Urban Design Review

January 2010



The Proposal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following urban design report assesses the merits of the proposed redevelopment to 89 George Street, Parramatta. The report assesses the current context, visual impact, bulk, scale and massing of the proposed building as well as the intended material finishes to the facades.

The conclusions drawn indicate the proposal will result in a discernable improvement to the standard of urban design in the greater George Street area.

In particular, it is important to note:

- The proposal is contextually appropriate in both the context of the existing urban form and in relation to the desired future character of the area which allows for greater densities, heights and building bulk.
- The proposal introduces an attractive interface between the western boundary of the site and the adjoining Perth House heritage item and maintains an appropriate bulk and scale in relation to Perth House.
- The site is located in the heart of the commercial core of Parramatta and is within easy walking distance of key public transport, retail, entertainment and community facilities.
- The standard of architectural design of the proposed building is of a high quality complementing Council's desired urban design outcomes and encouraging similarly high quality redevelopment of neighbouring sites.
- The proposal improves both the pedestrian environment and urban presence to George Street through the introduction of a building that directly addresses the street.
- The proposal introduces a distinct 'podium level' that complements the existing heights to built form at both 85 and 91 George Street.

It is therefore recommended Council support this development application.



Aerial Photograph – Parramatta Commercial Core

The Proposal

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

KEY FEATURES:

Relationship to Heritage Item

- Generous building setback to western elevation to emphasise the significance of Perth House and maintain the urban design integrity of this heritage item.
- Create a 'double height' pedestrian colonnade along common boundary to Perth House. This public / private interface will provide an appropriately scaled civic edge to the heritage item and its courtyard setting.
- The pedestrianised colonnade area is to include active ground level uses such as cafes. Coupled with specific lighting treatments this treatment to the western elevation of the new development will create a setting that is both safe and attractive to visitors.
- The design and intended finishes of the colonnade respond to Perth House in terms of materials, aesthetics and scale.
- The higher elements of the western elevation of the new building will provide a discrete, screened backdrop to the heritage item as well as integrate with the surrounding, broader streetscape.

George Street Frontage

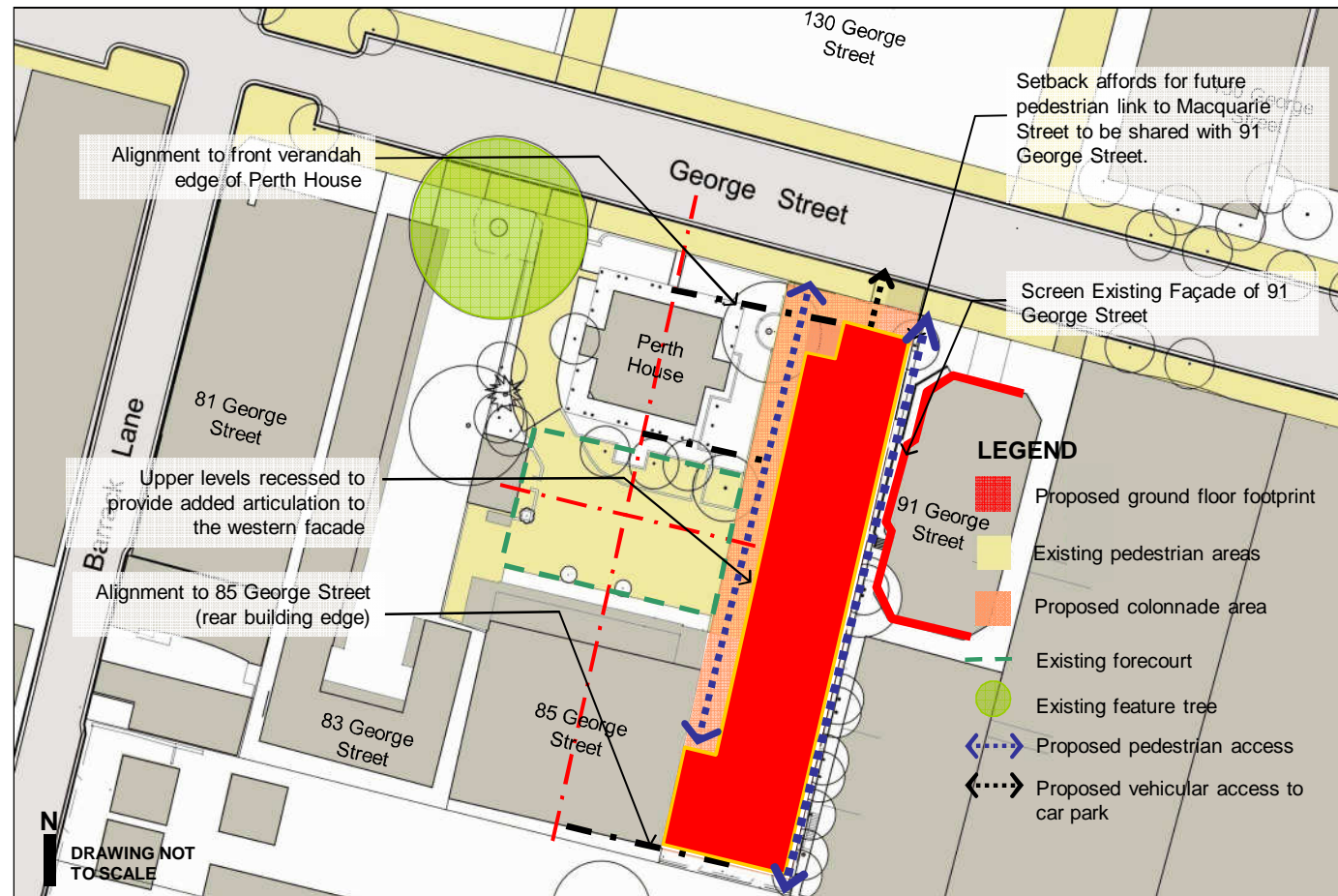
- The proposed built form acts as a legible 'corner' to the street wall at its western boundary as the 'eroded corner' at the lower level allows better visibility of Perth House.
- Vehicular access to on-site underground parking is well removed from Perth House.

Relationship to 91 George Street

- Proposed built form will screen the blank western façade of 91 George Street thereby improving the general appearance of the streetscape.
- 1m setback to site boundary contributes to future pedestrian link from George Street to Macquarie Street as envisioned by the City Centre DCP. This link would be shared with 91 George Street subject to future redevelopment of 91 George Street and extension of link through school grounds directly to the south of 89 and 91 George Streets.

Additional Architectural Elements

- Rooftop features to provide a way finding / skyline element when viewed from vantage points across the Parramatta CBD.
- At night the building is intended to act as a 'screened lantern' providing increased visual interest to the streetscape.
- Discrete upper level roof lighting will attractively mark the building in the Parramatta night skyline.



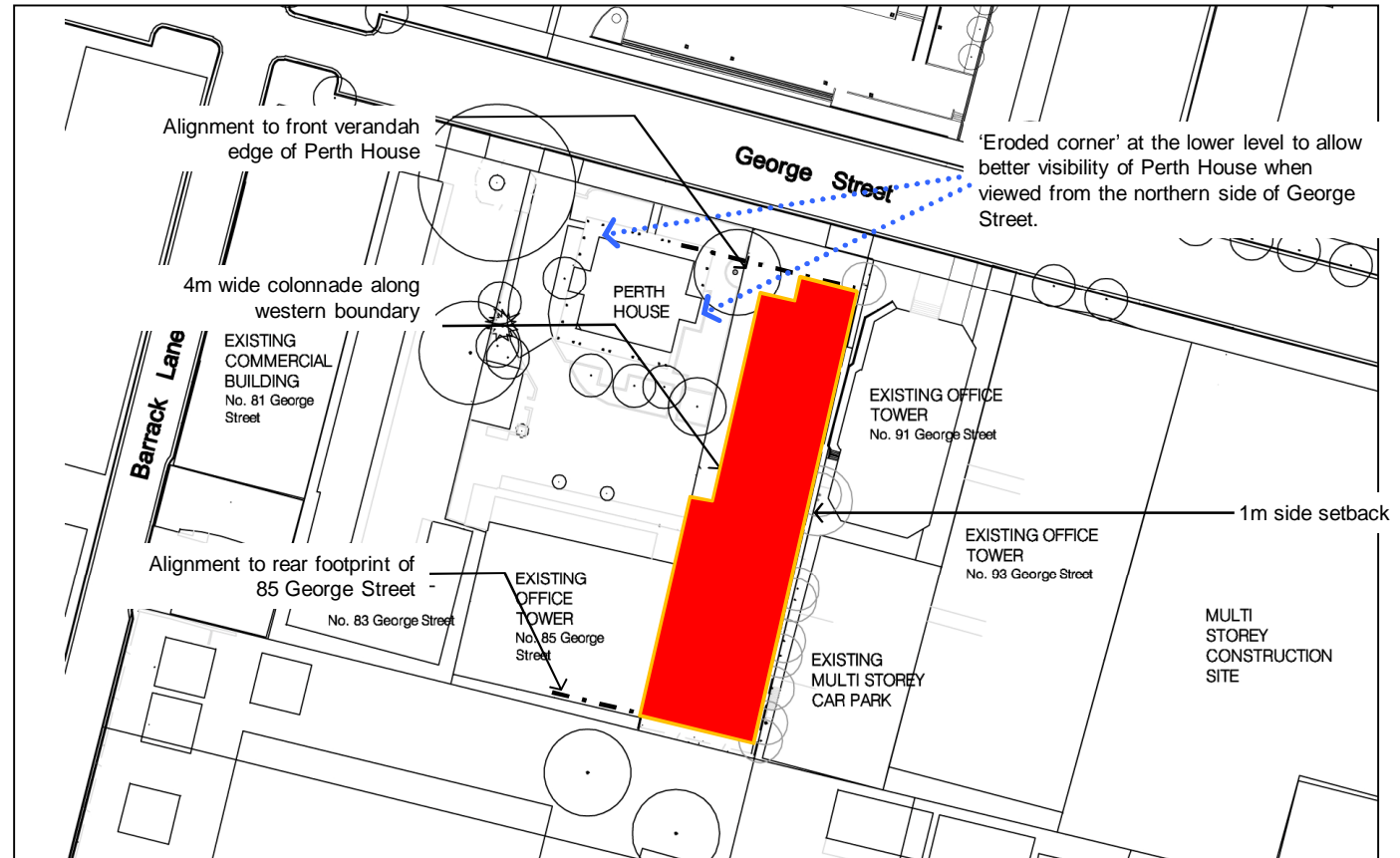
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BUILDING ENVELOPE

KEY FEATURES:

Level 1

- The continuation of the generous building setback to the western elevation.
- The inclusion of an 'eroded corner' element to the north-western corner of the new building to maintain strong view lines to Perth House from the northern side of George Street.



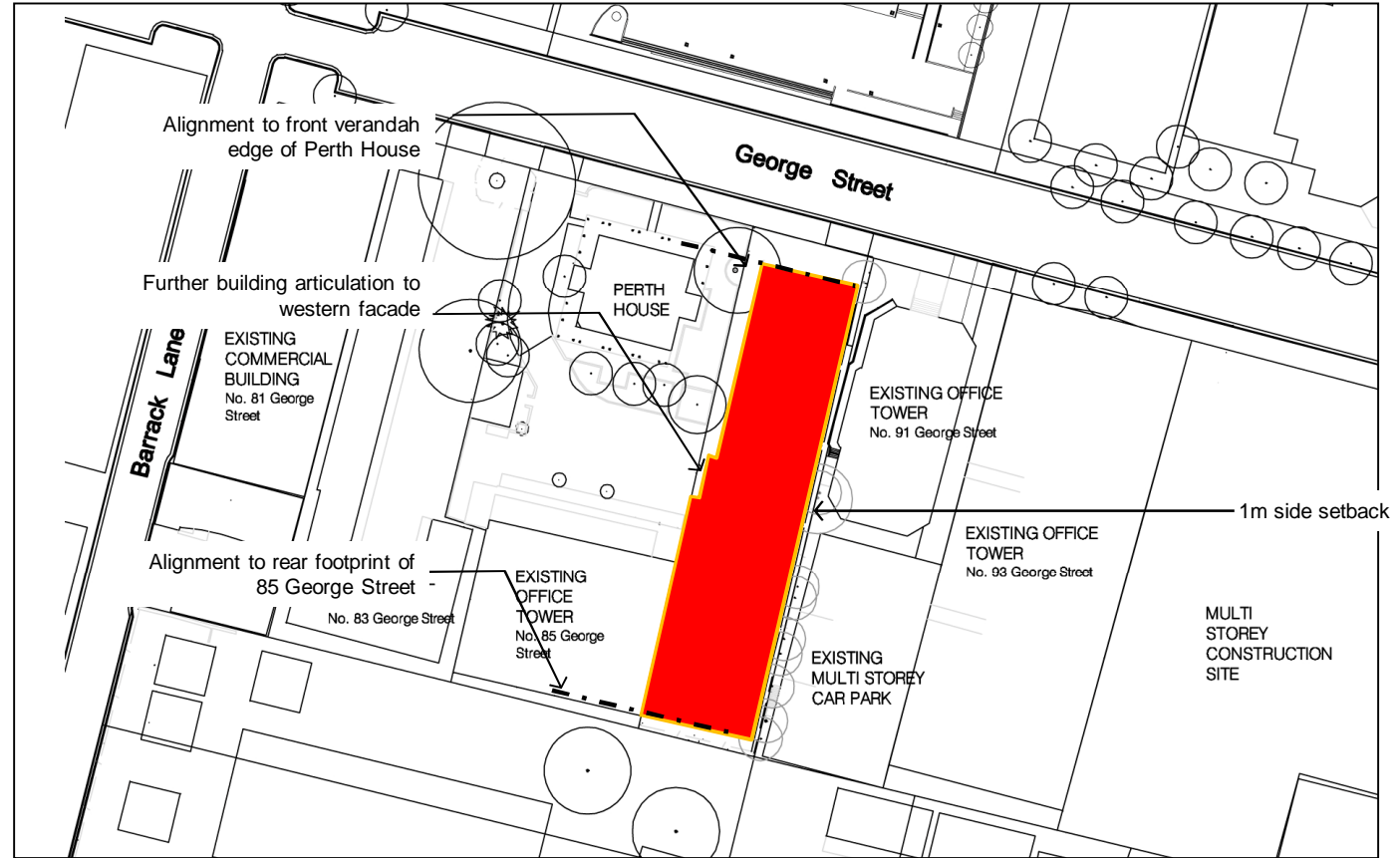
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BUILDING ENVELOPE

KEY FEATURES:

Level 3 (Levels 2-5 Typical)

- The introduction of a variation to the extent and style of articulation to the western façade. More 'stepping' of the setback to the western boundary providing an increase in visual interest to the elevation.
- The continuation of the 'street podium' style setback to the northern (George Street) elevation, mirroring the established setback of the front verandah to Perth House.



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BUILDING ENVELOPE

KEY FEATURES:

Level 8 (Levels 6-13 Typical)

- The further alteration of the extent of articulation to the western façade. The upper levels of the building will partially overhang the lower, adding to the visual interest both within the building and from the public realm.
- The recessing of the northern (George Street) setback to 8m from the street alignment. This extended setback creates the appearance of a 'podium' style to the lower levels of the building.

STREETSCAPE – ELEVATIONS (Following pages)

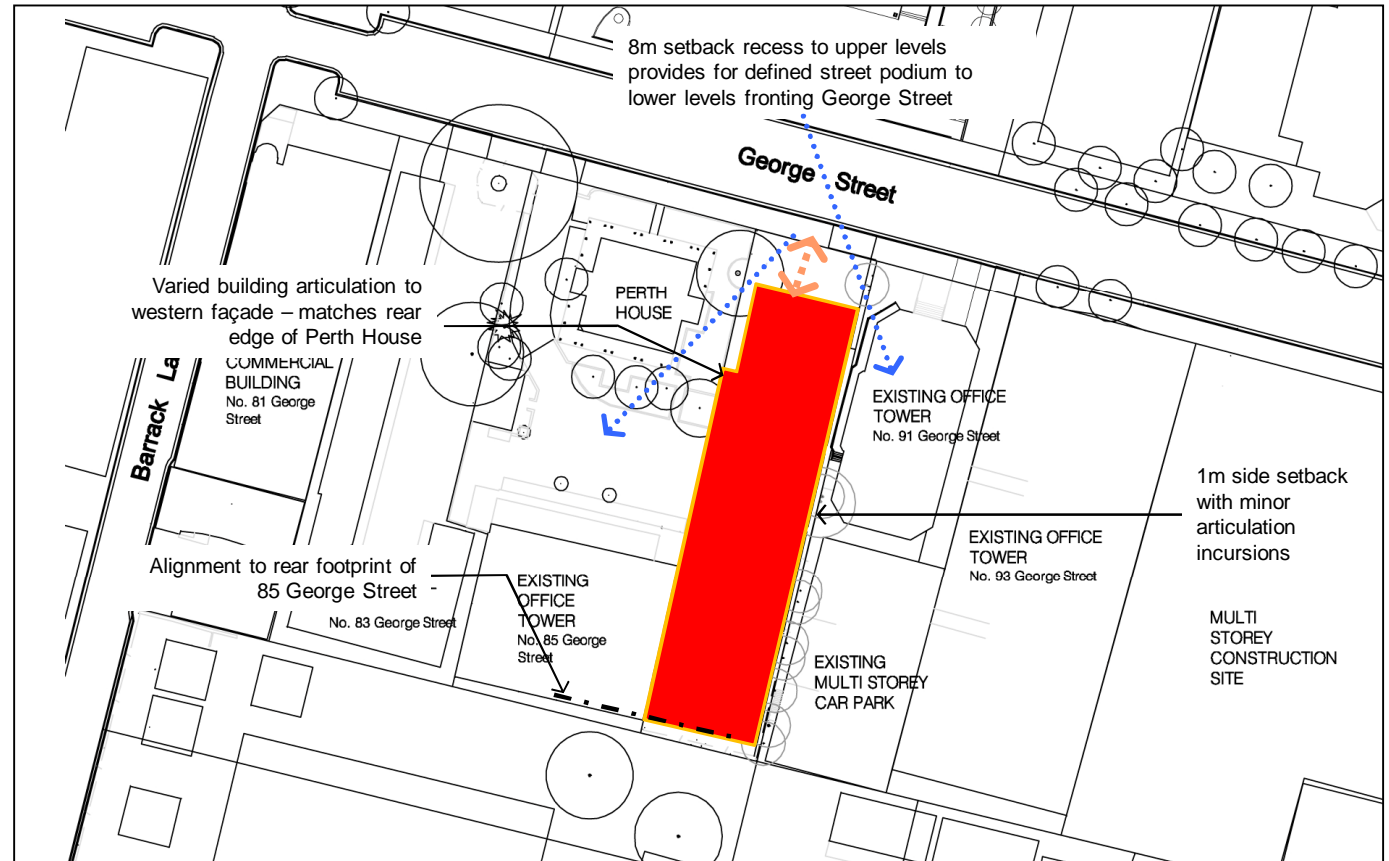
- The following pages provide an illustrative representation of the intended urban design relationship of the proposed building in its George Street elevation.

Northern Elevation

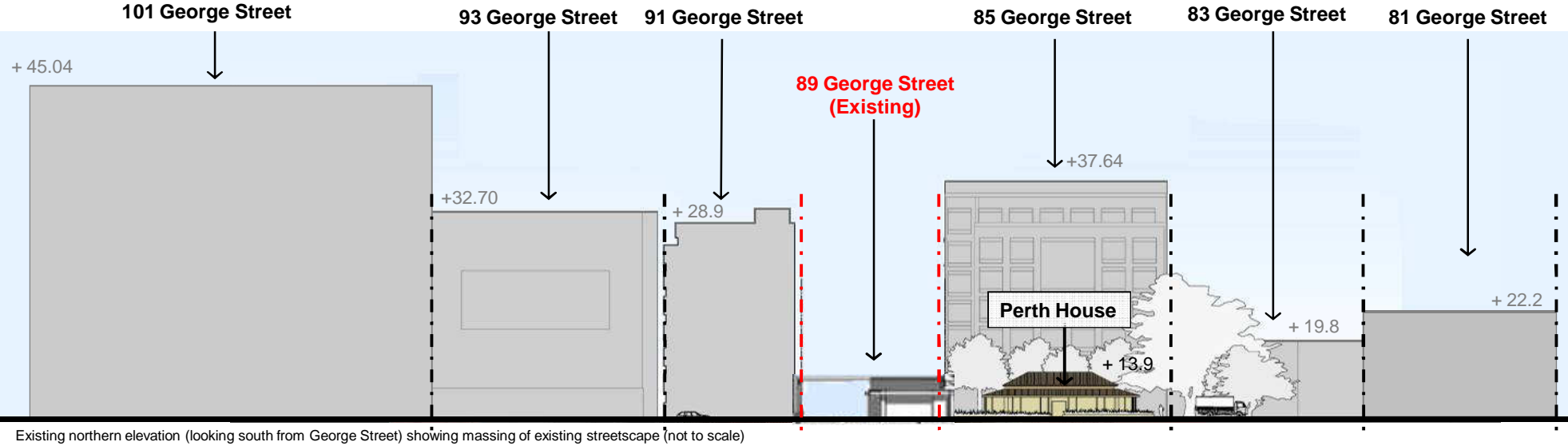
- As can be seen, a discernable effort has been made in the architectural design to complement the podium scale of existing buildings to 85, 91 and 93 George Street through the inclusion of distinct articulated elements to the northern elevation of the proposed building. While avoiding a direct 'copying' of the existing building heights either side of the site, the proposal loosely mimics the general scale of existing buildings to its podium level.

Southern Elevation

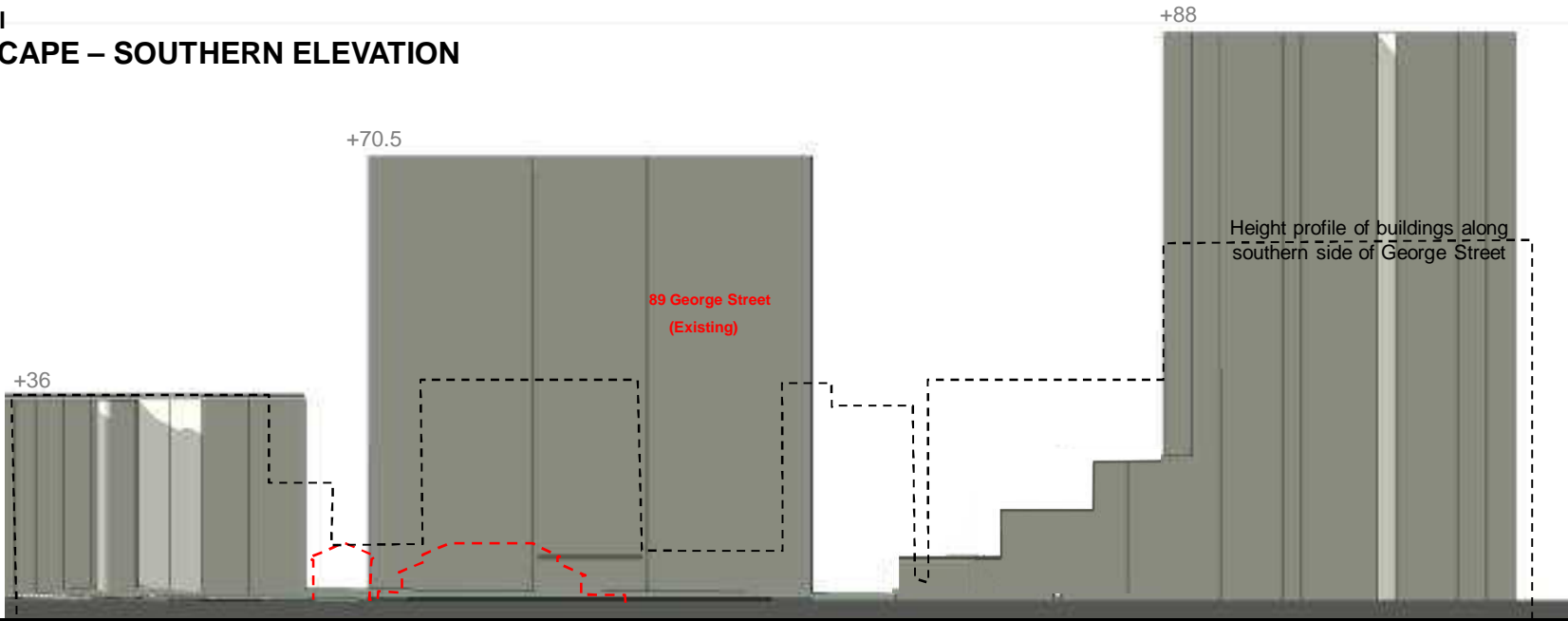
- The southern elevations clearly indicate the proposed development is in keeping with the scale and height of surrounding development. The proposal will not overwhelm the existing landmark elements nor will it detract from the established skyline to the northern frontage of George Street.



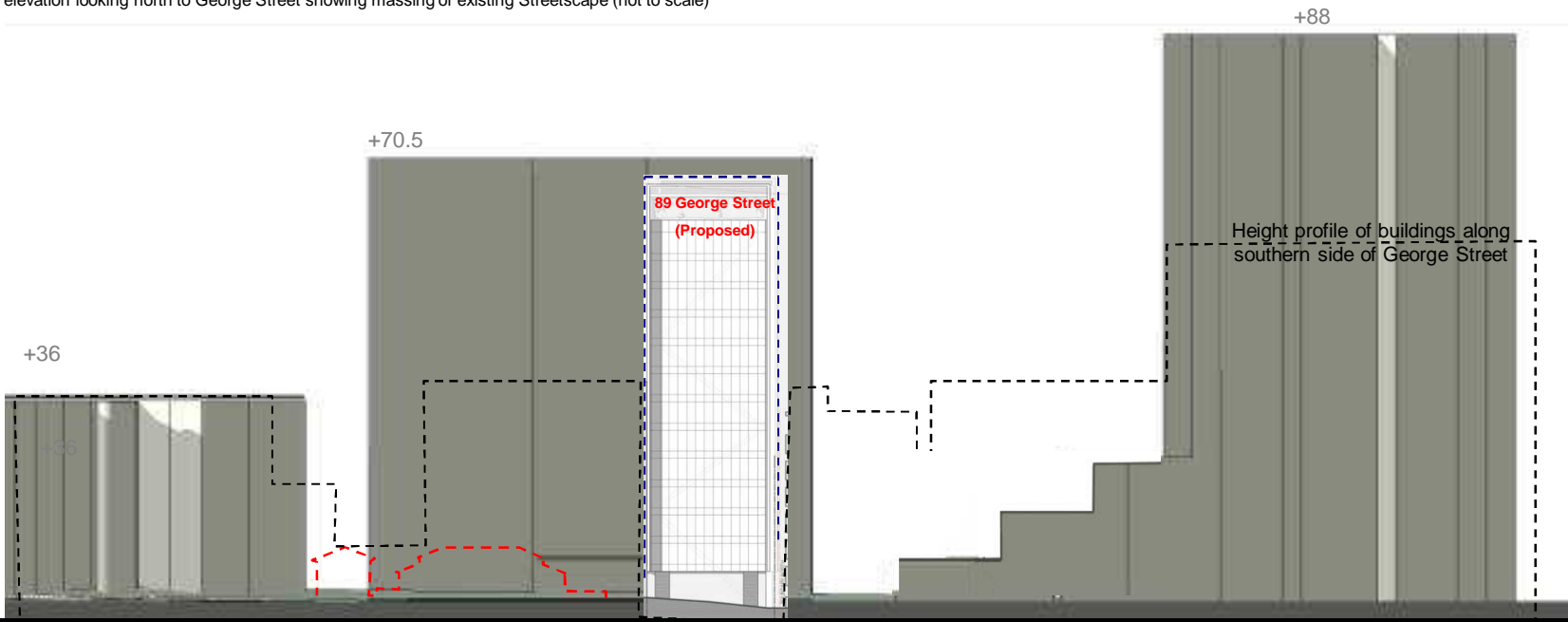
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STREETSCAPE – NORTHERN ELEVATION



The Proposal
STREETSCAPE – SOUTHERN ELEVATION



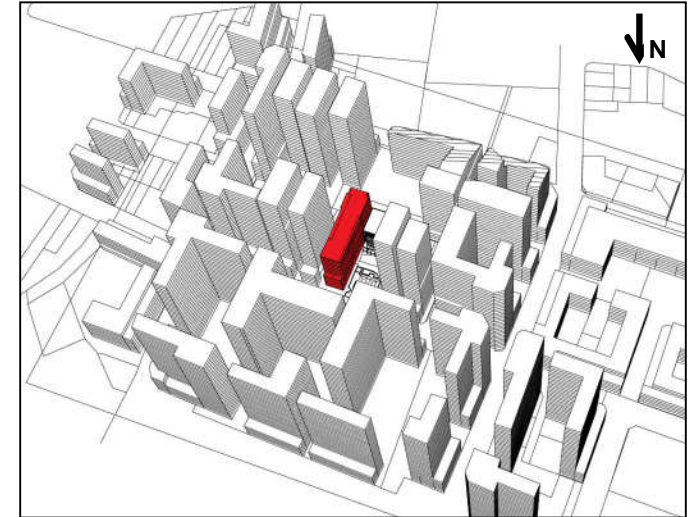
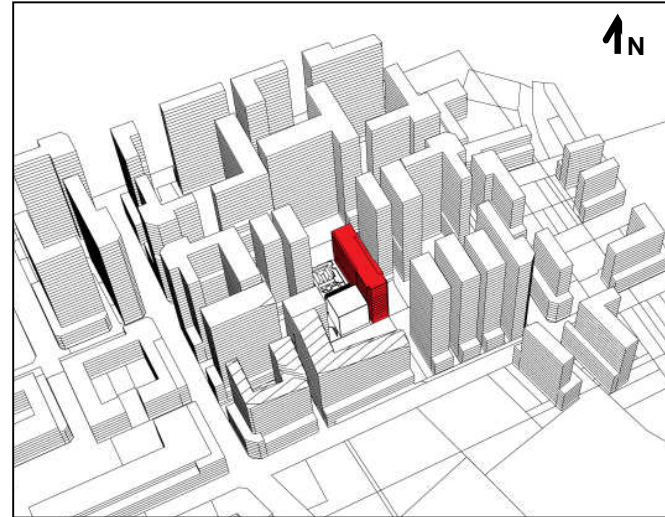
Existing southern elevation looking north to George Street showing massing of existing Streetscape (not to scale)



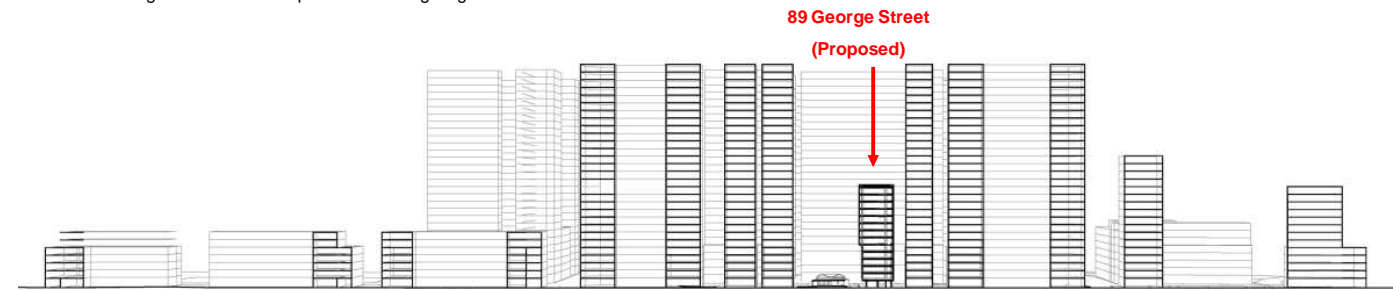
Southern elevation looking north towards George Street showing massing of existing Streetscape (not to scale) including proposal

The Proposal FUTURE BUILT FORM CONTEXT

- The Parramatta City Centre LEP and DCP encourage higher density commercial development in the commercial core area surrounding the site. The proposed height and bulk of 89 George Street is clearly in keeping with any future redevelopment of nearby sites in accordance with these controls. In fact, the building height proposed at 89 George Street is substantially less than that which may be achieved on adjoining allotments.
- The proposed development at 89 George Street is likely to be lower and of less bulk than future buildings, particularly considering the built form controls applicable to the sites on the northern side of George Street.
- The design anticipates the future urban form of Parramatta City Centre while maintaining a sympathetic relationship with Perth House, thus being of a lower height and smaller FSR than that permitted by the applicable development controls and guidelines.
- The school grounds adjoining 89 George Street to the south are highly susceptible to change and could either be sold by the school for commercial development or could be retained for educational purposes and undergo redevelopment in the form of a 'vertical' school which would be in keeping with the desired future character of Parramatta's commercial core, provide sufficient floor space to keep pace with the education needs of an expanding local population, and allow the retention of important open space for school recreation.



Axonometric Diagrams – Maximum possible building height



Section (view north) – Possible Future Built Form Context

Future Built Form Context Model

The future built form scenario represented in the adjoining figures was created by modeling possible future building envelopes by considering City Centre LEP and DCP controls including maximum height and FSR, active streets and street address as well as the solar access plan controls for Lancer Barracks.

The model clearly demonstrates the proposed development is well within the potential bulk and scale development context for the commercial core of the Parramatta City Centre.



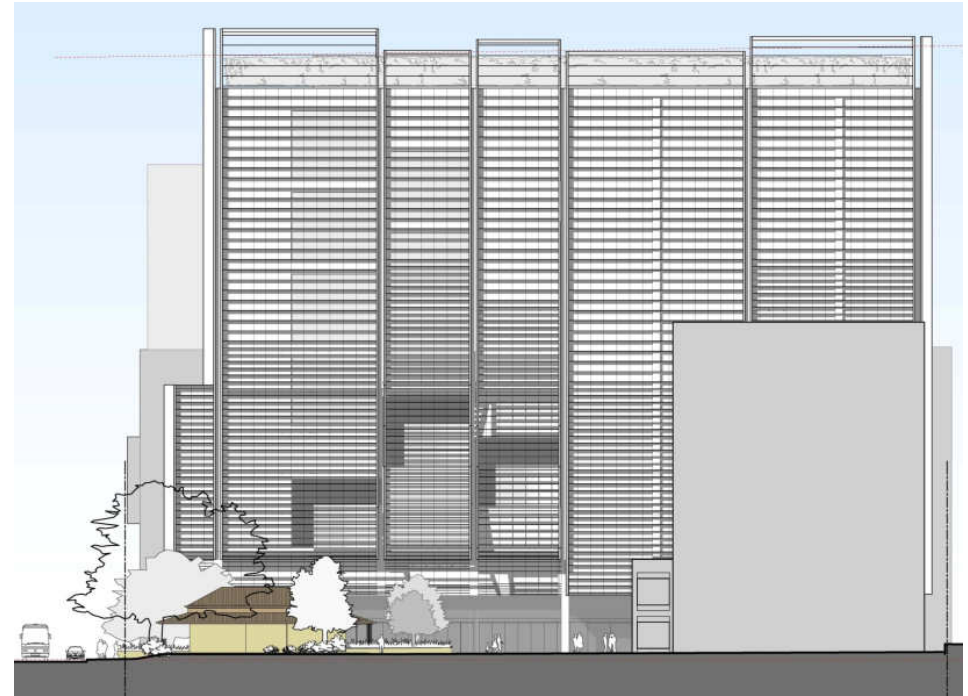
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FACADE TREATMENT

KEY FEATURES:

The 'Veil'

- The facade treatment is described by the architect as a 'veil'. This veil works to control the design complexities of the site and to maintain an appropriate focus on Perth House and the immediate surrounds and courtyard.
- The veil is a facade louvre system that has been introduced to provide unified articulation to the new building while not distracting from the heritage integrity of Perth House. The approach is also intended as a subtle control of scale while protecting the facades from solar heat gain.
- The three tiered approach to the building design is reflected in the application of this 'veil' approach. The lower portion of the building presents a denser and consistent spacing of the shading louvres. This provides the visual 'anchor' to the building, while the upper tiers are designed with a less dense application of the shading louvre devices. The figure adjacent provides an illustration of the intended western elevation. This provides a clear indication of the application of louvres with a manipulation of both the perceived articulation and bulk of the structure through the varying the density of louvre use.



West Elevation (Source - Woods Bagot dwg A3001/P9)



(Image source - Woods Bagot)

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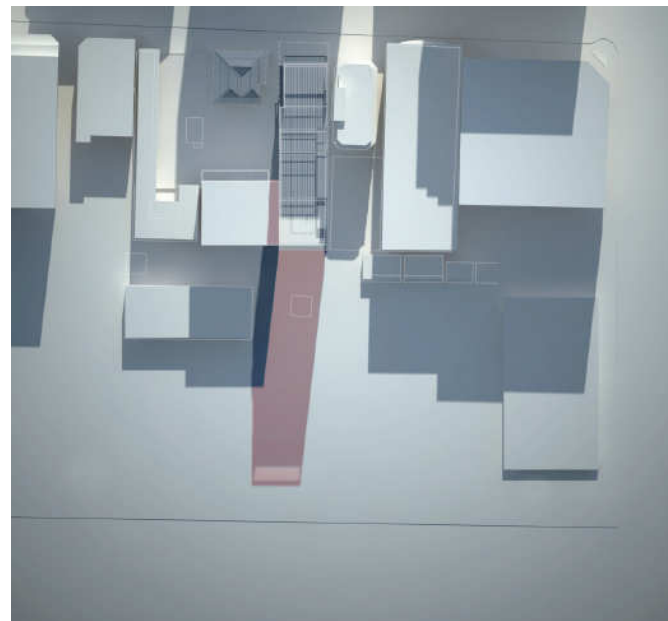
SOLAR IMPACT

- Woods Bagot have prepared three sun shadow diagrams of the proposal. Our investigation indicates the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact upon public spaces in terms of solar access. As can be seen in the adjacent images, only in the afternoons of mid winter will the solar impact of the proposal actually affect Macquarie Street, to the south of George Street.
- The solar impact upon Parramatta Public School (immediately to the south of the site) is also deemed acceptable given the open areas of the school retain the majority of the existing level of solar access (see June 21st: Noon figure, below).

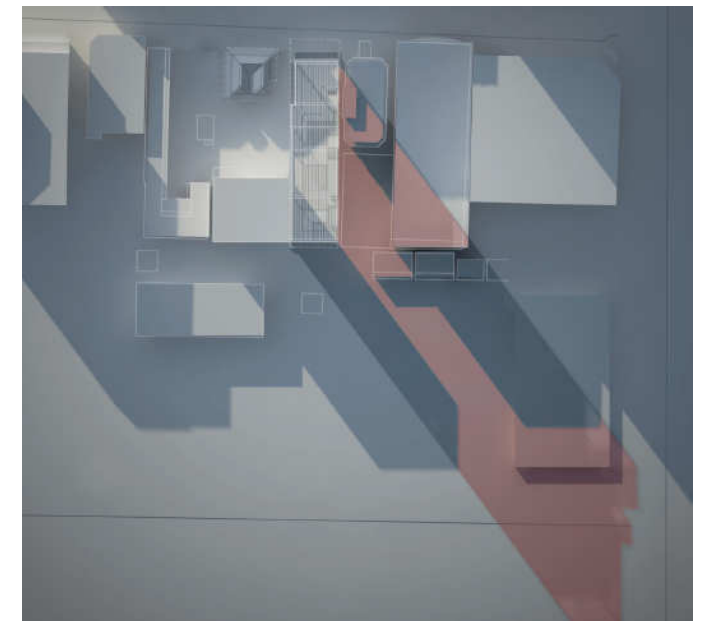
(Images source - Woods Bagot)



JUNE 21ST: 9am



JUNE 21ST: NOON



JUNE 21ST: 3pm

ADDITIONAL SHADOW
CAST BY PROPOSAL

The Proposal

CONCLUSION

It is recommended the proposed redevelopment of 89 George Street, Parramatta be supported on the following urban design basis:

- The site is located in the heart of the commercial core of Parramatta and is within easy walking distance of key public transport, retail, entertainment and community facilities.
- The standard of architectural design of the proposed building is of a high quality complementing Council's desired urban design outcomes and encouraging similarly high quality redevelopment of neighbouring sites.
- The proposal introduces an attractive interface between the western boundary of the site and the adjoining heritage item.
- The proposal improves the broader western interface between the heritage item and adjoining development by removing the unsightly visual link between Perth House and the western façade of 91 George Street.
- The likely redevelopment of the school grounds to the south of 89 George Street and north of Macquarie Street should respond to Parramatta's desired future character and to meet the education or commercial needs of the CBD and will ameliorate any perceived impacts of the development on this land to the south.
- The proposal improves both the pedestrian environment and urban presence to George Street through the introduction of a building that directly addresses the street.
- The proposal introduces a distinct 'podium level' that complements the existing heights to built form at both 85 and 91 George Street.

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