

Appendix Z

Visual and urban design assessment

Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd

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Visual and Urban Design Assessment



33 Bligh Street, Sydney Proposed Substation and Commercial Tower

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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	4
1.1	Context of the Report	
1.2	Relevant Extracts from the Project DGRs	
1.3	Relationship with other reports	
1.4	Listed Heritage Items in the Vicinity of the Site	
1.5	Authorship	
1.6	Reference Documents	
2.0	Urban Cultural Landscape Context	6
2.1	Introduction – Buildings of different ages and scales	
2.2	Bligh Street	
2.3	O’Connell Street	
2.4	Hunter Street	
2.5	Richard Johnson Square	
2.6	Wider Locality	
3.0	Description of the Subject Proposal	25
3.1	Architect’s Design Statement	
4.0	Visual and Urban Design Assessment	31
4.1	Key Aspects of the Surrounding Urban Landscape	
4.2	Design Principle 1	
4.3	Design Principle 2	
4.4	Design Principle 3	
4.5	Design Principle 6	
5.0	Conclusions and Recommendations	35

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context of the Report

This Visual and Urban Design Assessment has been undertaken in relation to the proposed Integrated Commercial Tower component of the proposed Sydney Citygrid – Stage 2A (ii) City East Zone Substation. It has been undertaken in the context of the Director-General's Requirements for the Environmental Assessment of MP11-0092.

The Assessment has been prepared by Graham Brooks, Director, Graham Brooks and Associates, Heritage Consultants, to complement other reports prepared in accordance with the Director-General's Requirements. It specifically focuses on the design relationships and potential visual impacts of the proposed Commercial Tower component of the project with the surrounding historic urban landscape context and the heritage listed items that contribute to this landscape.

The subject site is located in the northern quadrant of the Sydney Central Business District. It has frontages to 33 Bligh Street and 20-22 and 24-26 O'Connell Street.

There are a number of individually listed heritage items within the vicinity of the subject site, most notably the late Victorian era former NSW Club at 31 Bligh Street, immediately adjacent to the subject site. This precinct of the city has experienced numerous waves of development since first settlement in the 1790s and provides physical evidence of a number of those recent layers, most notably in its street pattern and built fabric.

1.2 Relevant Extracts from the Project DGRs

The specific DGR under examination in this report relate to the Visual Impact and Urban Design requirement. This requires an examination of the design review process, which shall be based on the principles of the design review competition of the Sydney LEP 2005 and include consultation with Council. The design of the building envelopes and built form is required to demonstrate consistency with a number of design principles. The specific comments from Sydney City Council in relation to Design Principles 3 and 6 have been incorporated into the DGR and are responded to below.

The specific Design Principles that are examined in this Assessment are as follows:

Design Principle 1

Generate a high quality for the site and introduce a building form that respects and integrates well with its immediate context, including the heritage significance of the surrounding buildings and space, and provides a distinctive architectural contribution to the area and the city skyline.

Design Principle 2

Improve the quality and significance of the public domain of the site and the precinct (specifically Richard Johnson Square)

Design Principle 3

Conserve and respect existing heritage items and archaeological items and streetscapes within and adjacent to the site. The design should enhance the context of surrounding heritage items and in particular should give special consideration to the use of materials, massing, heights and proportions of surrounding items.

Design Principle 6

The design in the vicinity of the adjacent heritage listed property to the north at 31 Bligh Street should aim to incorporate a street setback that aligns with the former NSW Club, and maintains views to this item, looking north along Bligh Street.

The specific methodology adopted in this Assessment is to build an understanding of the complex historical and architectural context of the site within this northern section of the Central Business District. This understanding will provide the basis for reviewing the current design proposal and analysing its relationship with its context.

1.3 Relationship with other reports

This Assessment complements other reports prepared in relation to the Visual Impacts and Urban Design DGR.

It also complements the Non Indigenous Heritage Assessment DGR, being the August 2011 *Statement of Heritage Impact* for the project prepared by NBRS + Partners, Heritage Consultants. The NBRS + Partners SHI document was prepared on the basis of the Kann Finch drawings dated April 2010 and the Fitzpatrick + Partners drawings dated February 2011.

The current Assessment did not refer to the Kann Finch drawings. It was based on Fitzpatrick + Partners architectural drawings prepared in September 2011, which represented a phase of design development from the February 2011 material.

1.4 Listed Heritage Items in the Vicinity of the Site

The August 2011 *Statement of Heritage Impact* confirmed that the subject site is not listed as a Heritage Item on Schedule 8 of the *Central Sydney LEP 2005*. It did identify a number of listed Heritage Items in the vicinity of the subject site. These are:

The Statement of Heritage Impact report identified the following listed heritage items in the vicinity of the subject site. This Assessment agrees that these are the relevant items to be considered in any analysis of potential impacts on heritage items in the vicinity.

- 31 Bligh Street, formerly the NSW Club. A low rise, four storey city club building in the Victorian Academic Classical style, erected in the 1880s to a design by the well known architect William Wardell. It was extended vertically with the current mansard roof in the early 1920s.
- 16-18 O'Connell Street, formerly Delfin House. A medium rise (approximately 13 storey) commercial office building in the Inter-war Art Deco style, erected in the late 1930s to a design by the well known architect C Bruce Delit.
- 19-21 O'Connell Street, Public Trust Office. A medium rise (approximately 8 storey) commercial building in the Inter-war Commercial Palazzo style, erected in the early 1920s to a design by the prominent architects Ross and Rowe.
- 60-66 Hunter Street, formerly City Mutual Life Assurance. A medium rise (approximately 12 storey) commercial office building in the Inter-war Art Deco style, erected in the late 1930s to a design by the prominent architect Emil Soderstein.
- 27 O'Connell Street / 64-66 Pitt Street, formerly Wales House. A medium rise (approximately 9 storey) commercial building in the Inter-war Classical style, erected in the late 1920s to a design by the architects Manson & Pickering. The building was originally erected for the Fairfax Newspaper publishers, was subsequently converted to a Bank and more recently to a hotel.

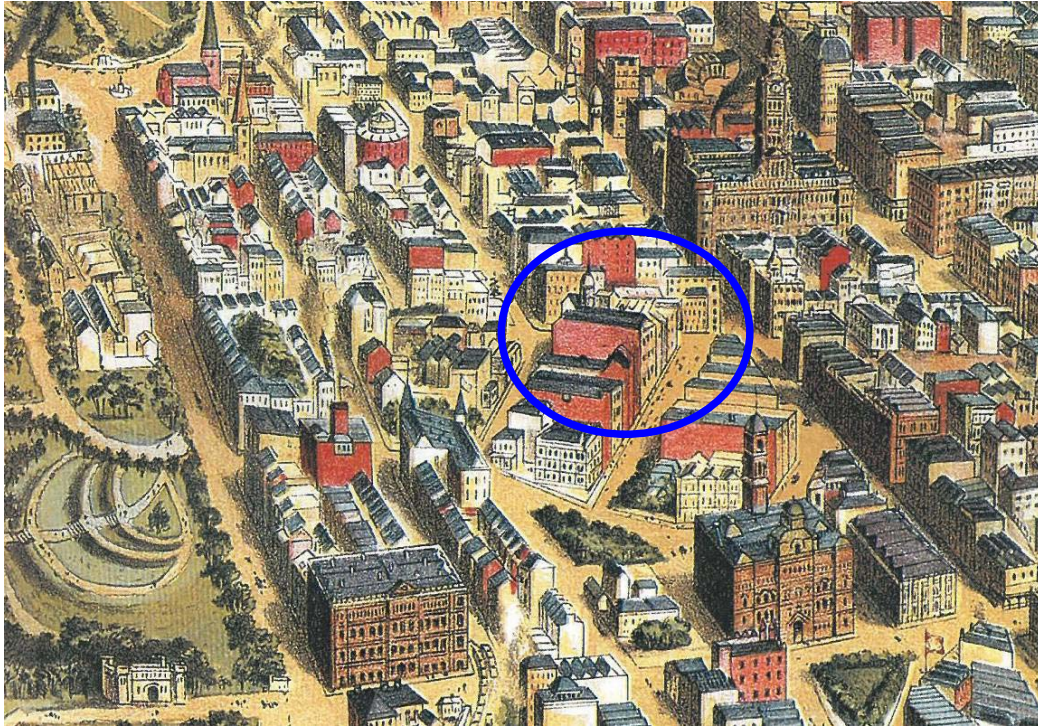
2.0 Urban Cultural Landscape Context

2.1 Introduction – Buildings of different ages and scales

The northern section of the Sydney Central Business District has been subjected to periodic waves of development pressure since the 1790s. In effect this portion of the city has been extensively redeveloped on a number of occasions as building technology, changing materials, planning and development regulations, commercial pressures and economic progress required the city to expand within its tightly defined geographic borders.

These phases of development have generated a unique urban cultural landscape where tall and very tall buildings sit in close proximity with relatively small and very small older buildings.

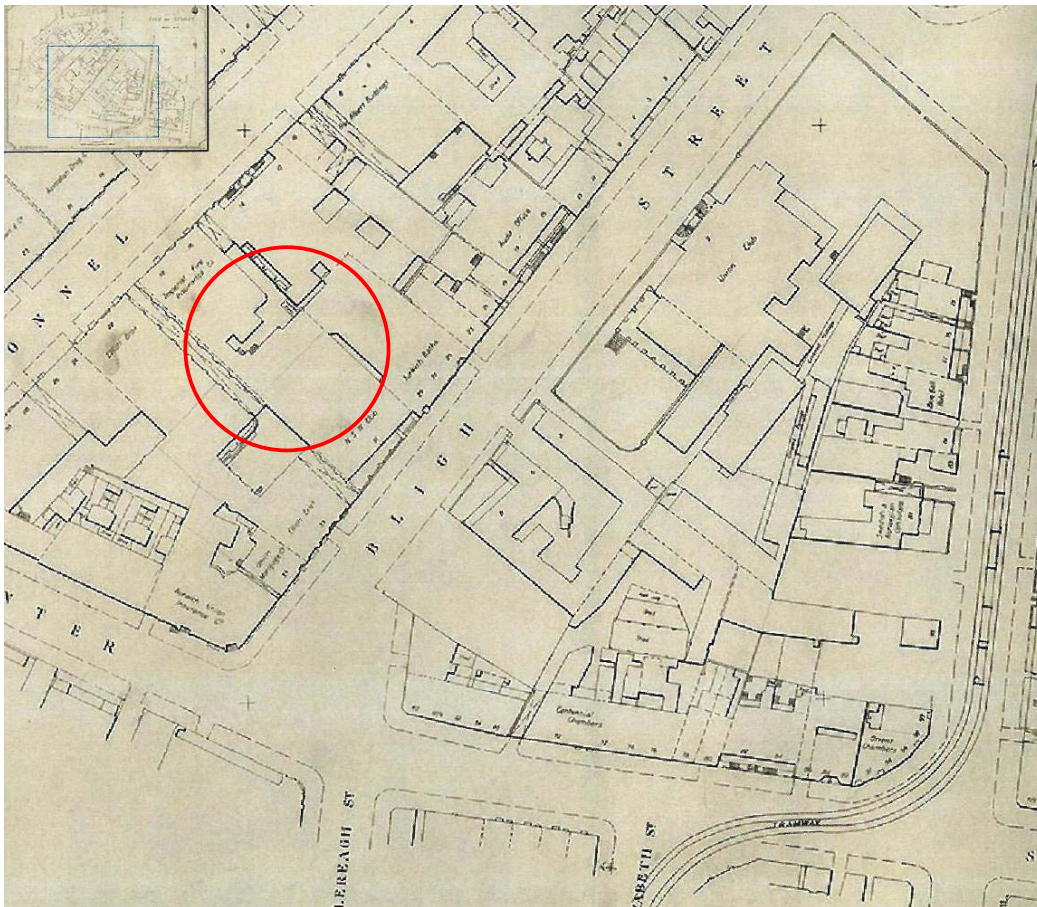
As a result, the northern section of the Sydney CBD presents a distinctive urban vitality that defies traditional notions of “sympathetic” scale and architectural compatibility between adjoining buildings or those within clearly defined streetscapes.



1887 Birds Eye View of the northern section of the Sydney City commercial district. The subject site is shown circled.

The early character of the precinct is now largely defined by the underlying street pattern. This seems to have changed little from at least the 1880s and was exploited with the introduction of a tramway network that took advantage of the splayed intersection of Bligh and Hunter Streets to accommodate the alignment of tram tracks from Castlereagh Street.

The late 19th century is largely defined by several significant public buildings, most of which line Bridge Street, and most relevantly by the four storey former NSW Club at 31 Bligh Street. This relatively small but robustly designed sandstone building is set at an angle to the street alignment and is set back behind a small front garden.



Extract from the 1884 Metropolitan Series indicating that the NSW Club was always set at a splay to the Bligh Street frontage. Note also the splayed intersection of Bligh and Hunter Streets which is now known as Richard Johnson Square, and the small court on the southern side of the NSW Club that would have permitted its side elevation to be visible from the street.

By the 1930s the NSW Club was sandwiched between slightly larger commercial buildings that had been erected in subsequent decades. All of these had been demolished and redeveloped by the late 20th century, with the former NSW Club now surrounded by high and very high rise buildings.

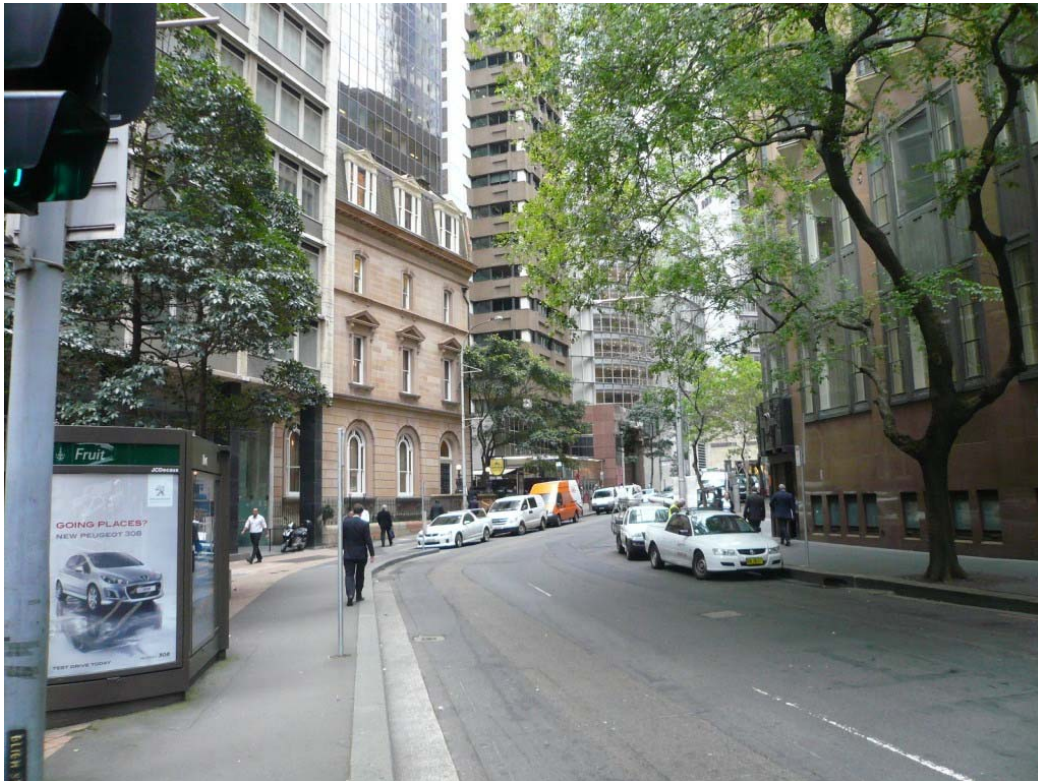
In addition the post war preference for setbacks from the street to form small forecourt plazas to high rise buildings (since reversed), created a series of small café/retail plazas to the north of the former Club, exposing its northern wall in a manner created by a very different urban context.



Bligh Street in the 1930s looking towards the NSW Club building past the recently erected monument in Richard Johnson Square. The photo shows how the club building was set at an angle to the Bligh Street frontage (Source State Library of NSW)

The decades between the two World Wars saw a dramatic increase in building height from the predominant scale of Victorian Sydney. Commercial buildings of the 1920s were typically of six to eight storeys, buildings from the 1930s of 10 to 15 storeys. Most continued the strong masonry imagery of the late 19th century, with sandstone and granite as the primary façade materials progressively being replaced with terraced cotta and other modern technology. Load bearing construction was replaced with structural frames in steel or concrete, generating radically different façade expressions and an increasing proportion of windows. Architectural detailing became more simplified in response to the new materials, increased scale and architectural styles. Buildings such as the City Mutual Life began to address the wider city context, making strong statements on prominent corners. One notable feature of the earlier buildings that was continued into the new taller buildings was the inclusion of a strong base to the building, often using different colours and materials to reinforce the stability and solid nature of the building on its urban site.

Post War architecture and development was released from the long standing shackles of maximum building height regulations. By the late 1960s the scale of buildings in this precinct increased towards 15-20 storeys and their footprints became larger as site amalgamations were made possible by more aggressive economic times. This trend extended into the 1970s and 1980s when the prevailing heights of new commercial buildings in the immediate vicinity, including those at the rear and side of the former NSW Club and the ANZ building in Market Street again radically altered the scale of this section of the CBD. Others at the northern ends of Bligh and O'Connell Streets and the Governor Macquarie complex further north continue the theme of very tall buildings creating the dynamic complexity that distinguishes this part of the Sydney CBD.



Current view into Bligh Street from Hunter Street, with Richard Johnson Square on the left. The streetscape photos on the following pages illustrate buildings from these various stages of development, clearly demonstrating this visually exciting urban landscape.

2.2 Bligh Street



View into Bligh Street from the south in Hunter Street, showing how the Victorian NSW Club building is now contained within a framework of modern high rise commercial buildings.



The subject site comprises the 1960s Kindersley House commercial building.

The subject building is of a similar height to the adjoining commercial building to the south, on the corner of Hunter Street. It is considerably smaller than the adjacent high rise tower.



Despite the enormous change in its physical context, the former NSW Club remains as a very distinctive component of the Bligh Street streetscape.



The late 19th century visual context of the NSW Club underwent its first major alteration with the erection, in the late 1930s, of the 12 storey Art Deco style City Mutual Life Building, shown on the right.



The former mini plazas outside the two adjoining high rise office towers in Bligh Street have been degraded by the subsequent introduction of new entry canopies and café enclosures. Typically, these later entry canopies around the city make no attempt to reflect the architectural character of the original late 20th century building that forms their backdrop.



The subsequent entry canopy to the high rise Norwich Union building, with the circular composition of the recently completed office tower beyond.



View down Bligh Street past the mini-plazas to the side elevation of the former NSW Club building. Kindersley House, on the subject site forms the medium rise backdrop.



The high rise towers that effectively dwarf the four storey Victorian building, yet do not degrade its identity and significance.



Relatively recently installed café on the Bligh Street frontage of the office building next to the early 1970s former Wentworth Hotel, almost opposite subject site.



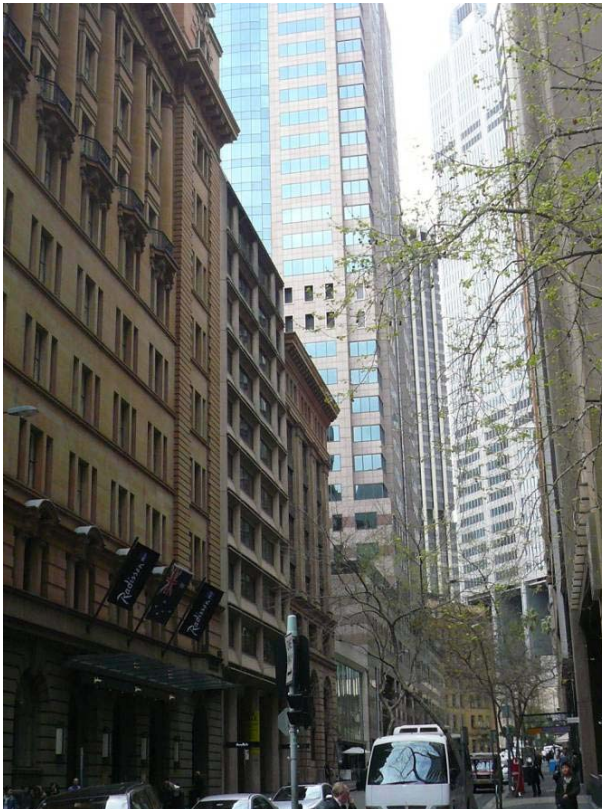
An indication of how the 1970s office building on the opposite side of Bligh Street has adopted the massing model of a lower podium before the tower component.

2.3 O'Connell Street



The medium rise commercial building on the corner of O'Connell and Hunter Streets is of similar scale to Kindersley House and the adjoining heritage item at 16-18 O'Connell Street.

The 1920s former Herald Building is on the opposite side of the intersection, forming the gateway to O'Connell Street.



Looking north along O'Connell Street past the early 20th century scale of the listed heritage items on the western side of the street to the high rise office towers at the end of the street.



The relatively recent entry podium to the O'Connell Street frontage of the high rise Norwich Union Building reflects the Bligh Street frontage. This property provides the only operational mid-block through site pedestrian link.



The finely detailed Art Deco design and proportions of the two medium rise mid 20th century buildings that will be adjacent to the subject building in O'Connell Street.



The current façade of Kindersley House stops at a reasonable height above the footpath, creating a well proportioned entry and matching the similar situation on the adjacent buildings to the south.



The Art Deco style former Delphin House is notable for the scale and architectural drama of its entry composition.

2.4 Hunter Street



The former Fairfax Newspaper building at the corner of O'Connell and Hunter Street is a dramatic reminder of the early 20th century development phase in the northern section of Sydney CBD.

It was extended upwards with the addition of an extra accommodation floor when recently converted into a hotel.



The medium rise former CML Building on the corner of Bligh and Hunter Street forms an equally dramatic reminder of mid 20th century development. It was one of the first buildings in the precinct to break through the prevailing urban height and address a new skyline for the city.



This 1920s Classical style commercial building on the southern side of Hunter Street provides a strong visual termination to views down Bligh Street and is a further reminder of the early 20th century development phase.



The visually “free standing” nature of this building, where adjoining high rise buildings on either side stand back to reveal its three dimensionality, strengthen its streetscape presence and enable it to fit comfortably into a dynamic mix of building scales.

2.5 Richard Johnson Square



Richard Johnson Square was formed in the triangular land created by the extension of the Castlereagh Street alignment into the off-centre Bligh Street alignment.

Its expansion was first facilitated by the removal of the tram lines and subsequently by the closure of the end of Bligh Street.



The scale of the Square is defined by the medium rise commercial buildings that line both sides and by the spatial connections to the three street alignments that define it.



The current configuration of the Square dates from the late 20th century refurbishment works.

The Square forms the entry into Bligh Street from the south and is an important pocket of public open space in the foreground of the subject site.



The Square celebrates the 18th century religious work of Rev Richard Johnson. The monument was erected in c1925 and has been relocated several times when the Square was refurbished.



Views along the old footpath line, beside the main part of the Square and past the subject site are an important introduction to the former NSW Club. The projection forward of Kindersley House obscures views to the upper facade of the historic building.



There are significant changes of level across the Square that will need to be taken into account in any refurbishment.

The ground floor level of the office building on the corner and the adjacent Kindersley House, as defined by the black wall, are relatively high at the corner.



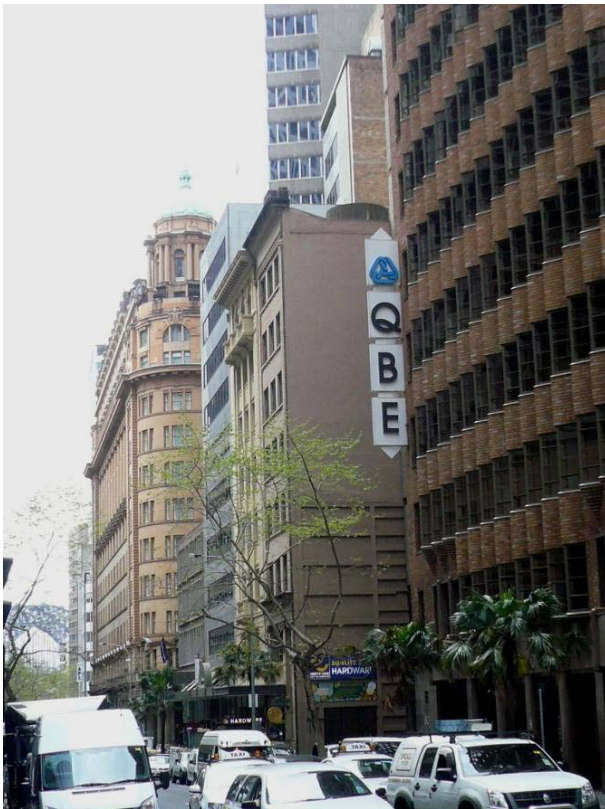
The relative height of the floor level of the adjoining buildings diminishes as the footpath rises.

2.6 Wider Locality



An example of the min-plaza setbacks preferred in the foreground of 1970s era commercial developments throughout the city.

This example indicates how the side elevation of the adjoining 1920s building has been exposed by this development policy.



A second photo of the group of 1920s buildings that contribute to the streetscape character of Pitt Street near the intersection with Hunter Street.

The adjoining QBE building represents the next phase of development in the vicinity.



View west on Market Street looking towards George Street, illustrating the rich mix of relatively small buildings and larger, taller commercial developments that combine to define the dynamic urban character of the northern CBD.



A view down George Street to the General Post Office. These large, late 19th century institutional buildings add a distinctive and robust character to the precinct that comfortably sits in juxtaposition with the taller modern buildings behind.

3.0 Description of the Subject Proposal

3.1 Architect's Design Statement

The Architect's Design Statement prepared by Fitzpatrick + Partners contains the following responses to the site and the project brief.

A building of international quality for Sydney, it adds positively to the skyline, it strengthens the existing street alignment vistas and patterns of the city. The building sits within a mixture of low rise heritage buildings, mid rise buildings from the 1960s and is bordered by high rise towers. It creates a point of difference, its own expression, yet is a good neighbour to the surrounding buildings.

It bridges the surrounding commercial hubs of Sydney by providing a mid block link, an important amenity for the users of the city and the building. It allows filtering and movement through the site, continuously activating the streetscapes.

The innovative approach and careful proportioning of the entry element adds a new character to the streetscape, but closely relates to the neighbouring heritage buildings in colour, material, scale and detail.

The form of the tower maximises the opportunity offered from the site without impacting on surrounding buildings, and the amenity of the area. The tower becomes identifiable from afar, yet sits comfortably in the city skyline. The façade creates a visually rich screen of constantly changing patterns.

A simple palette of materials detailed carefully, creates an impression of quality and longevity. The lack of applied decoration masking the design is clear. Decoration is applied through the layering of light and shadow over the building.

The complexities of incorporating a major substation into the base of the building allow few opportunities to engage with the ground plane of streetscape and this opportunity has been maximised.

The future redevelopment of Richard Johnson Square additionally presents the opportunity to create a public active space for this small discrepancy within the tight city grid.

The proposed building podium's vertical scale, detail and pattern of use as defined by the internal functioning of a major multi-storey substation creates a significant departure to that of the early and subsequent structures on this site and surrounding sites. Creating a solid built mass abutting the heritage building which is significantly different in scale and fenestration will alienate the former NSW Club from an important part of its original urban context and risk lessening its value as a participant in the urban street wall or enclosure of the location. The alternative, of creating a vertical slot or curtilage around the historic Club building façade similarly risks removing the contextual street pattern in which the building was originally viewed, results in a presentation of it as a museum piece isolated from any context.



View looking north in Bligh Street



View looking south in Bligh Street



View looking south in O'Connell Street



The forward projection of Kindersley House to its street alignment blocks close quarter views to the Victorian façade of the former NSW Club.

The various setbacks contained in the new proposal improve this view considerably.



The forward projection of Kindersley House completely dominates the immediate context of the former NSW Club.

The rich combination of new elements, and their setback behind the façade of the Club will greatly improve this relationship and afford greater urban respect to this heritage item.

The proposed solution resolves this issue by a careful play of proportion, alignment, level of detail and materiality to achieve a result which successfully respects and retains the integrity of the Club in a appropriate contextual framework.

The main mass of the building is constrained to the southern portion of the site. The cross link slot is left open as a negative space on the Bligh Street frontage. Its vertical overhead enclosure is set back from the podium street alignment, and reduced in height. The precast concrete stair is also set back from the podium street alignment and continues as an open stair the full height of the building. Its detailing and open character creates a pattern of light and dark, adding a further layer of detail against the northern neighbour. The proposed massing reveals the edge and southern return elevation of the former NSW Club as one enters from Richard Johnson Square from Hunter Street.

As you move through the entry space the view corridor is tightened and the vertical scale of the tower becomes less of an issue due to its separation from the podium structure. The visual layers of heritage and new detail begin to come into focus. These layers, including the tower support structure, vertical stair elements, recessed negative joint enclosure and the connection to the northern heritage building slowly reveal themselves due to the changing perspective and setback from the Bligh Street frontage. This creates the visual connection and continuity with the street wall built form, reinstating the original contextual nature of this part of the streetscape.

The commercial office tower major plant is located directly over the top of the zone substation, offering the most flexible positioning of services as well as creating flexibility for the core placement of the tower over. It also elevates the location of the sky lobby closer to the top of the southern neighbouring buildings, increasing the amount of daylight penetration into the space. It visually removes the solidity that otherwise would have been suspended above the lobby space, creating a heavy object suspension against the light boxes over. It allows the tower to float over the podium further breaking down the visual mass of the development from the street.

The decorative stone screen covering the substation is terminated at street level with a glass wall housing the café space to Bligh Street overlooking and opening out onto the refurbished Richard Johnson Square.

4.0 Visual and Urban Design Assessment

4.1 Key Aspects of the Surrounding Urban Landscape

Aspects of the surrounding urban cultural landscape that must be responded to in the new design:

- The highly complex mix of surrounding buildings, including heritage items, reflecting differing ages, scales, materials, architectural design, setbacks, heights and massing within both Bligh and O'Connell Streets, as well as further afield.
- The relatively small scale but robust architectural composition of the immediately adjoining former NSW Club
- The generally vertical proportions of most of the surrounding buildings, irrespective of their ages or scales
- The medium rise massing of the surrounding mid 20th century buildings
- The high rise massing and skyline presence of the adjoining and nearby commercial towers
- The poor quality of the surrounding streetscape derived from subsequent infill development of the former set-back plazas at the base of adjoining high rise towers
- The quality of Richard Johnson Square and opportunities presented from the extensive excavation required to connect underground cables into the substation

4.2 Design Principle 1

Generate a high quality for the site and introduce a building form that respects and integrates well with its immediate context, including the heritage significance of the surrounding buildings and space, and provides a distinctive architectural contribution to the area and the city skyline.

Response to the Design Principle:

The following aspects of the proposed development are considered successful in this context:

- The location of the multi-storey mass of the substation to the south of the overall site enabling the development of a narrow vertical slot against the adjoining small scale NSW Club building. This creates opportunities to introduce relatively small scale, albeit long vertical elements, close to the older building, responding to its scale with a complex combination of smaller scale spaces and richly detailed architectural components.
- Location of the through site link and service core against the northern boundary create significant opportunities to model the scale and composition of the building against the adjoining former NSW Club, while locating the large mass of the substation against the opposite boundary, as far from the small Victorian building as possible.
- The setbacks of the new vertical stair tower and structural column from the façade alignment of the adjoining Club provide visual relief to the immediate backdrop of the historic building when viewed from the north down Bligh Street.

- The distinctly different treatment of the multi-storey substation enclosure, which forms the base of the new development, compared to the high rise tower section, including the separation between the two components created by high level sky lobby. This enables the overall building to create an urban dialogue with both the medium rise and the high rise buildings in its locality. This aspect is reinforced by the return of the substation screen into the setback of the stair tower, emphasising the mass of the lower element and its relatively sympathetic scale against the lower historic building when compared with the uninterrupted sheer façade massing of the high rise building behind it.
- The decorative composition and artistic expression of the screen on the substation massing to both Bligh and O'Connell Street facades. The robust scale and sandstone materiality of the louvres create a strong reference to the heavily detailed sandstone facades of the surrounding 19th and early 20th century buildings. They also successfully screen the visually random pattern and scale of the ventilation louvres required by the substation that would otherwise be very visually disruptive and make no contribution to the surrounding streetscapes.
- The successful integration of the Bligh Street café into the façade composition of the main building, in contrast to the poor quality and unresolved nature of the later additions at street level for the adjoining plaza setbacks of the two high rise towers.

The following aspects of the proposed development should be considered in more depth:

- The visual presentation of the façade louvre composition masking the mass of the substation on both the Bligh and O'Connell Street frontages may appear too monolithic and unified when viewed from a distance. This issue can be resolved through close collaboration with the artist during design development.
- The relatively low height of the underside of the decorative façade screen to the Bligh and O'Connell Street frontages, when compared with the higher ground floor recesses of adjoining buildings, particularly on O'Connell Street. This is apparently unavoidable given the required locations and layouts of the louvres on the substation elevations.

4.2 Design Principle 2

Improve the quality and significance of the public domain of the site and the precinct (specifically Richard Johnson Square)

Response to the Design Principle:

The following aspects of the proposed development are considered successful in this context:

- The general upgrading of Richard Johnson Square, which was first dedicated in 1925 and has been the subject of periodic alterations and modifications in accordance with surrounding traffic conditions.

The following aspects of the proposed development should be considered in more depth:

- The potential for the vertical edge of the Square against the Hunter Street frontage to be too visually high and spatially disruptive when viewed from Hunter Street, as it may restrict views into the Square from pedestrians walking up the Hunter Street footpath as they cross into the Bligh Street intersection. This can be mitigated through careful design for the upgraded Square, the creation of an appropriate setting for the monument and greatly improved public amenity.

4.3 Design Principle 3

Conserve and respect existing heritage items and archaeological items and streetscapes within and adjacent to the site. The design should enhance the context of surrounding heritage items and in particular should give special consideration to the use of materials, massing, heights and proportions of surrounding items.

Response to the Design Principle:

This Design Principle has been largely dealt with in the August 2011 *Statement of Heritage Impact* prepared by NBRS + Partners.

The following aspects of the proposed development are considered successful in this context:

- The proposal respects the significance and streetscape identity of the various heritage items in the vicinity by means of the architectural massing with its vertical proportions, the separation created by the sky lobby between the massing of the base (substation) to reflect the variety of surrounding early and mid 20th century medium rise heritage items and other buildings, and the separate massing of the high rise commercial tower, as it rises into the skyline context of the existing high rise buildings.
- More particularly it respects the scale and identity of the adjoining former NSW Club by standing the main visual mass back from its common boundary, by setting the Bligh Street façade back to open vistas to the historic building, and by the visually refined lightness of the texture of modern elements, albeit of a high rise nature, which form the backdrop to the Club building when viewed from the north.
- The proposed presentation of a portion of the southern side wall of the former NSW Club is a positive outcome as it reinforces the three dimensionality of the building and strengthens its presence in the streetscape. It is apparent from the 1884 map that this portion of the southern side façade was originally open to a laneway or court on the subject site.
- The selection of sandstone for the deep external louvres and their artistic composition on both the Bligh and O'Connell Street facades successfully masks the multi-storey bulk of the substation with its more functional louvres behind.

The following aspects of the proposed development should be considered in more depth:

- The subject site is not considered to have any archaeological sensitivity due to the previous excavations for basements. However it is highly likely that the land below Richard Johnson Square may have archaeological sensitivity. The land below the Square may be impacted if there are any excavations for the associated underground cable connections to the substation. The archaeological management provisions of the NSW Heritage Act should be followed, commencing with the preparation of an Archaeological Assessment.

4.4 Design Principle 6

The design in the vicinity of the adjacent heritage listed property to the north at 31 Bligh Street should aim to incorporate a street setback that aligns with the former NSW Club, and maintains views to this item, looking north along Bligh Street.

Response to the Design Principle:

The following aspects of the proposed development are considered successful in this context:

- The way the new lobby and stair tower are recessed back from the Bligh Street frontage opening up views to the corner and southern façade of the Club building in a manner that reflects the narrow adjoining laneway evident on the 1880s map. With the removal of the projecting Kindersley House against its southern corner, the visual mass of the Club building will be recaptured and considerably strengthened, enabling it to better define its own identity in the Bligh Street streetscape.
- The way that the mass of the substation at street level is pulled back from the on the Bligh Street frontage and aligned directly with the splayed façade of the adjoining Club building. This creates enhanced view lines to the historic building when approaching through Richard Johnson Square from Hunter Street.
- The future proposal to raise the general level of Richard Johnson Square in the vicinity o Hunter Street will create a larger viewing catchment in this location for the appreciation of the historic Club building.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

- The current, developed design by Fitzpatrick + Partners Architects represents a high quality intervention into the fabric of the complex urban cultural landscape of the Sydney Central Business District.
- It responds well to a demanding brief that combines the major technical requirements of the new multi-storey substation with a need for extensive commercial space to facilitate the feasibility of the overall project.
- The dramatic different façade treatments of the visual massing of the substation and the high rise commercial component, broken horizontally with the sky lounge upper foyer, breaks the overall composition in a manner that responds exceptionally well to the divergent scale of the surrounding buildings, several of which are heritage items.
- The decision to set back the substation against the southern boundary of the site opens up a vital slot against the adjoining historic buildings on both the Bligh and O'Connell Street frontages, enabling the introduction of generous setbacks against the adjoining buildings as well as the introduction of a smaller scale texture with the stair tower and entry foyer detailing.
- The project meets and exceeds the expectations of the Design Principles contained in the Direct-General's Requirements for the project, as discussed above.
- The project meets and exceeds the requirements for the sound protection of and respect for the heritage significance of adjoining heritage items and those in the vicinity of the site.

5.2 Recommendations

- The relevant consent authorities should have no hesitation, in heritage and urban design terms, in approving this proposal.
- Considerable care and design development will be necessary to resolve the complex challenges facing the refurbishment of Richard Johnson Square.
- There are no heritage based reasons to prevent the refurbishment of the Square and the relocation of the historic monument within the space.

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