



University of Technology Sydney
New Research Building
UTS Blackfriars Precinct
4-12 Buckland Street, Chippendale NSW

State Significant Development SSD 6746
Stage 1 Development Application (Use and Envelope)
Revised Envelope August 2016
Heritage Assessment

Background

Our office prepared a heritage impact assessment for the proposal as part of the application.

That submission was based on a CMP that had been prepared before this project was envisaged. The arguments and analysis set out in those documents is not reiterated in this response to the comments provided by the Department.

A number of changes to the proposed envelope were raised and this report responds to the changes requested and proposed.

The early HIS considered that the building envelope proposed was sound and that the concept of providing a larger envelope than the proposed floor space allowed a degree of design flexibility rather than dictating a building outline by a tightly defined envelope. That view is maintained although it is now evident that the building to be provided will by necessity fairly closely follow the envelope controls now set out.

As the revised controls are less than and within the former controls (in terms of outline, height, setbacks etc.) except for the regularizing of the southern envelope alignment, it can be set out that the revised envelope is supported, has no greater possible impacts than the previous scheme and will by a reduction in height and change of setbacks have less potential impacts as the form is smaller.

However, simply being less or smaller does not address all of the matters that may arise. Consequently the key changes are discussed below.

Appropriateness of the built form in the locality.

The addition of a larger form into this end of the site was acknowledged at the time of submission as strong statement. It was not submitted without careful thought and consideration as to how best to add new built form onto the site.

This end of the existing site is closely aligned to the tall building on the west of Buckland Street and the potential to build a substantial built form to the north on the Notre Dame site. The proposed form will create an entry into the Buckland Street

area and demarcates the difference between Broadway and the Chippendale 3-4 storey developments that sit behind the main road frontage.

Separation to School Buildings.

The separation of new built form to the existing school buildings is a product of the envelope controls, that is how close they are to the existing buildings and the detailed design of the building within those controls. The two cannot be separated or considered in isolation.

The envelope control as proposed is appropriate provided that the building design responds to the adjoining buildings and the setting.

The existing school buildings are designed to be seen in the round (or largely in the round as one backs onto a boundary). They have a space between them that roughly relates to a road width as does the proposed separation to the north. Historically a T-shaped road separated the site into three areas with the two heritage buildings located on lots divided by the road layout. The proposed building is located on the third lot that was created by the same road pattern.

The proposed envelope separation is appropriate but must be considered in conjunction with the proposed design and detail of the future building.

Setbacks to Buckland Street.

The setbacks to Buckland Street have been modified to create a ground setback adjacent to the heritage building and vertical setbacks at the higher levels. The original submission proposed a zero setback and the building addressing the street as is seen in most of the adjacent larger developments. The revised setbacks provide open space at ground level and retain a section of the palisade fence. It is our view that retention of the fence was not a critical element, but there are advantages in keeping some of the fence and creating a landscaped area near the boundary.

There are also advantages in locating the built form on the street frontage in terms of use of the site, creating a strong and defined entry into the area from Broadway and in general massing. As the future development on the land to the north is not known but is potentially under the planning scheme provisions capable of building to the street frontage and having a number of storeys, development in this corner to the street alignment is both possible and desirable.

The reduction in height at the boundary is acceptable but not in our view a necessary outcome. Similarly there is no heritage rationale to aligning the height of the building to a particular feature on the heritage buildings. It is unwise to adopt simplistic approaches to locating buildings in the vicinity of a heritage building, rather the context needs to be understood and proposals developed that allow an interface between new and old that can respond siting, form, use of materials, amenity etc.

The proposed envelope in its earlier form and in its reduced form responds to the heritage building, the setting and context with appropriate heights, massing and potential forms.

Height of the Proposal.

As noted above the height of the building has been reduced in this amendment. A discussion of the impact of height and setback has already been set out and is not repeated.

The revised heights are appropriate and respond well to the setting the adjacent sites and the other matters that area raised in the preceding points.

Form of the building.

The form of the building is now more set by the more prescribed envelope. This is acceptable as the revised envelope largely fits within the early envelope and was a possible outcome. The form of the building is not determined while the shape generally is. Form will be a product of the design process and will require careful consideration.

Skyline.

Our visual assessment of the original envelope established that the skyline was minimally impacted by the development due to the scale of surrounding buildings and the potential building envelope on the Notre Dame site to the north.

The reduction in height of the proposal reduces any impact for the skyline to be affected in long views to the site (particularly those from Broadway).

The stepping of the form fronting Buckland Street also reduces the apparent scale to the street frontage and while the top of the building is heavily screened by trees, greater sky view will be available as a result of the reduction in height and increase in setback.

While we considered the original proposal to be satisfactory the reductions now proposed reduce any potential for impact.

Geometry of the Building Envelope.

The original geometry (that is the angled front wall of the building) was intentional, not to simply suggest a diagonal wall but to allow for some design interest to be developed along the interface with the existing school buildings. We proposed this alignment as the best way to approach the site and the question of interface as we suggest it would lead to a well resolved built form in the location.

The revision to regularize the geometry we submit is unfortunate and limiting and will limit the ability of the new built form to respond to the setting. However, as this is required by the Department we observe that it can work and could be appropriate.

Summary

The revised envelope is an appropriate and satisfactory response to the heritage and urban design qualities and issues on and around the site.

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