

## DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING

**PROPERTY:** 100 Mount Street, North Sydney

**DATE:** 29 June 2011 @ 4.00 pm in the Geddes Room

**ATTENDANCE:** Panel Members: David Chesterman; Peter Webber; Russell Olsson; Phillip Graus.  
Council staff: Geoff Mossemeneer (chair)  
Proponents: Ray Brown (architect), Geoffrey Gerring (urban designer), Ben Lehmann (developer), Mark Maryska (developer), Paul Atree-Williams (planner).

The Panel had considered a proposal involving the demolition of existing buildings at 90 and 100 Mount Street and construction of a high rise office tower with vehicle access and loading facilities from Spring Street at its meeting of 7 July 2009. The Panel could not support the proposal until the matters concerning a through site link; the levels of the ground level setback in Mount Street; the treatment of the building in the Walker Street elevation between levels 8 and 12 and the breach of the required building setback from level 22 up are addressed by the applicant.

A site inspection was carried out by the Panel and Council staff prior to the July 2009 meeting.

At its meeting of 11 November 2009 the Panel commented on the Part 3A Development Application as follows:

*The Panel noted the changes to the public domain as a positive change subject to Council staff being able to comment on the loss of parking and increase in footpath widths in Mount Street. The change to Spring Street road and footpath treatment was acceptable.*

*The through site link was supported by the Panel and it was noted that the architect is looking at increasing the width if possible to activate the link with retail space. This is likely to be a very heavily used and popular route and require some imaginative detailed development.*

*The adjustment to the ground levels in Mount Street was noted by the Panel but the Panel felt that more could be achieved with moving the hydrants and planters to ensure a continuous travel path under the awning of the building. It is a very modest expectation that continuous cover for pedestrians should be provided for the full frontage, and this is particularly important on the southern orientation.*

*The Panel was very concerned that it is being assumed that the present street trees will have to be removed, they presently play a very important role in creating an attractive and cohesive character in both streets, and have*

*now reached semi-maturity. Their loss would be extremely unfortunate and should not be taken for granted.*

*The Panel did not have an issue with the height of the building as previously stated, but questioned whether some modulation/setback of the top level on the eastern side might not satisfactorily overcome the objections of others in relation to overshadowing impact on nearby residential areas.*

*The Panel noted that the Character Statement for the CBD under Council's Development Control Plan recommends a weighted average setback of the tower of 5m from Walker and Mount Street and 4m from Spring Street. It was also noted that Council had not raised concerns with the non compliance of the setbacks for Mount Street and Spring Street that resulted in a substantial increase to the floor plate of the building.*

*The Panel is strongly of the view that the proposed projection forward of the tower at level 22 on the Walker Street facade should not be permitted. It is still felt that, if permitted, the upper portion of the Walker Street façade would set a precedent and that the cumulative effect would be to close the apparent width of Walker Street. The projection would also add to overshadowing and wind effects in Walker Street*

*The Panel also maintains their concern with the setback treatment of the building between levels 8 and 12. The recess above the two levels fronting Walker Street with the very assertive exposed structural frame is inappropriate in this context. This is not justified and is grossly out of scale with the building's setting.*

The proposal was determined as a Major Project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 with the Minister for Planning as the consent authority. The Minister granted approval in May 2010 subject to the tower being setback 4.2m from Walker Street.

### **The Proposal:**

The applicant is proposing modifications to the consent under Section 75W of the Act and the Department will be determining the application. The application is likely to be lodged in approximately one month's time.

New architects have been engaged by the new owners (previously part owner) to create a more efficient and flexible floor plate and to stay within the approved building envelope.

The key changes to the approved development include:

- Relocation of core from north to west
- Improved ground floor plane to improve public space and movement through site

- Remove 2 vehicle access points in Spring Street and relocation to one access point in Walker Street to allow opportunity to create shared zone or possible closure of Spring Street in future
- Improvement to ESD performance
- Increase in GFA by 10%
- Relocation of amenities floor from basement to above ground

The project architect Ray Brown provided a presentation of the amendments that are being considered to the proposal and was available for questions and discussion with the Panel.

### **Panel Comments:**

The drawings presented at the meeting were slightly different to the information supplied. The design is still being fine tuned.

The Panel supported the relocation of the vehicle entrance to Walker Street providing that the balance of the Walker Street frontage is as active as possible. The Panel supported Spring Street becoming a shared zone.

The Panel supported the plaza option 02 for the treatment at the corner of Mount Street and the plaza above. The Panel suggested an awning over the Walker Street footpath in line with awnings to the north and the wall north of the carpark entrance being setback to widen the footpath into Spring Street. The plaza topography diagrams indicate that the detail resolution of the plaza and other proposed ground floor uses are not yet sufficiently developed with regards to their connection to the surrounding public domain. In particular the south east corner of the plaza area at the corner of Mount and Walker Streets. The lower level retail area could be enlarged and better relate to Mount Street if the stair between Mount Street and the plaza was either relocated or reconfigured. The area between the stair and the street edge also requires further consideration.

The Panel commented favourably on the location of a restaurant on the upper ground floor, on the amenities at mezzanine level and on the proposed floor to ceiling heights in the tower.

The Panel commented that the streetscape relationship to the heritage building to the north was important and needs to be resolved.

The Panel questioned the need for stairs to the south of the plaza. The Panel recommended that the through site link be kept as direct as possible and on the one level.

The Panel was concerned that the present street trees are shown to be removed, they presently play a very important role in creating an attractive and cohesive character in both streets, and have now reached semi-maturity. Their loss would be extremely unfortunate.

The Panel noted that the design of the tower is still being considered as is the top of the

tower. No concerns were raised with the proposed tower as presented to the meeting. The exposed structural frame on the eastern façade is considered to be potentially a reasonable solution. On the large northern and southern sides some articulation and modelling should be considered, rather than bland glazed facades.

Amenity for pedestrians in Mount Street is also extremely important. The impact of strong winds needs to be assessed, and the Panel considers that continuity of cover and protection from rain is very desirable.

**Conclusion:**

In summary, the Panel notes the improvements at ground level with the changes indicated at the presentation. Other matters of important detail raised above need to be addressed, particularly the quality of connection of the plaza to the surrounding streets. The Panel will provide further comment when the application is lodged with the Department.

*Meeting concluded at 4.45 pm*