

SJB Architects



Design Excellence Response Grafton Bond Hotel

60 Hickson Road - 201 Kent Street,
Sydney 2000

We create spaces people love.
SJB is passionate about the
possibilities of architecture,
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Investa

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1.1 Summary

This report aims to supplement the Briefing Paper prepared by Urbis, with regards to design excellence of the proposed project in relation to the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP).

The proposal includes the adaptive re-use of the State Heritage-listed Grafton Bond Stores, and erection of a new 30m building adjacent. Both buildings are to collectively accommodate a high quality boutique hotel.

In particular, our report addresses Clause 6.21(4) 'Design Excellence' of the SLEP 2012, which is annexed at the rear of this document.

(4) (a) whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved,

- The overall aim is to retain and celebrate the cultural values and heritage significance of the Grafton Bond Stores into the future.
- Through the development of conservation management strategies, the existing Grafton Bond Stores will be sensitively and respectfully converted from an underutilized commercial building, into a boutique hotel.
- Minimal architectural intervention will be employed to conserve and reveal the existing heritage fabric, together with a considered approach to new building services. Materials and detailing of new elements will complement the existing fabric, whilst expressing a contemporary overlay of development.
- The design of the adjacent contemporary hotel to the north, directly references the Grafton Bond Stores. The height of the proposed podium base reflects the datum of the existing parapet, with a contemporary interpretation of the parapet ridges.
- The podium facade derives its modulation from the rhythm and proportions of the Grafton Bond Store's original windows, interpreted in a contemporary design language.
- High quality Sydney sandstone will be employed to create a visual connection to the heritage brick of the Grafton Bond Stores, and pay homage to the sandstone cliffs and walls which still proliferate much of The Rocks and Barangaroo.
- The new hotel's subterranean lobby is set within the sandstone cliffs, exposing layers of Sydney's geographic and industrial history to the public.
- The development as a whole aims to provide a high quality, boutique experience, stitching together Sydney's history in the Grafton Bond Stores and future in Barangaroo.

(4) (b) whether the form and external appearance of the proposed development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain,

- Currently, the eastern facade of the Grafton Bond Stores is covered with a bulky and unsympathetic 1980's addition, which obscures the eastern facade from the existing public plaza. The proposed development removes this addition, making the original facade and heritage fabric visible from the public domain.
- The proposal also includes the conversion of the Hickson Road level of the Grafton Bond Stores from commercial use to hospitality and leisure, activating Hickson Road, and re-invigorating this significant building through public engagement.
- The proposed through-site link provides a new connection from Hickson Road to Kent Street. A publicly accessible lift in the new hotel lobby will allow for equitable access between Hickson Road and the existing plaza.
- This new link enhances the activation of both the existing plaza and Jenkins Street, by increasing the permeability of the site to the general public. A void from Jenkins Street through to the new hotel lobby below creates a visual link to Jenkins Street and the plaza.

(4) (c) whether the proposed development detrimentally impacts on view corridors,

- The proposed development does not include any new building above the existing Grafton Bond Stores, so there are no impacts on view corridors to this portion of the site.
- The adjacent new hotel to the north fits within the established urban form along Hickson Road, as defined by the neighbouring properties at no.s 30 and 38 Hickson Road.
- It also complies with the 30m height limit above natural ground level, as defined in the LEP, and will have minimal impact on surrounding buildings.
- A full view analysis study will be conducted as part of the development of the design and planning process.



Existing view of Hickson Road from intersection with Napoleon Street



Proposed view of Hickson Road from intersection with Napoleon Street, with envelope of new hotel

(4) (d) how the proposed development addresses the following matters:

(i) the suitability of the land for development,

- The site is highly suitable for the proposed development. Its overall size and dimensions allow for the scale of development proposed.
- the site is located within the existing B8 Metropolitan Centre Zone (Sydney LEP 2012), and the proposed uses are permissible within the zone.
- It is well situated at the Western Edge Precinct of Central Sydney, and the new commercial centre of Barangaroo. This local area is currently under-served by mid-sized boutique hotels.
- The development takes advantage of existing and proposed public transport. It is located within 400m of Wynyard Train Station, the proposed future light rail stop and the newly completed Barangaroo Ferry Wharf. The development is also located within 500m of the proposed Barangaroo metro station.
- The State Heritage-listed Grafton Bond Store is currently underutilised as a commercial office and provides low levels of opportunity for public engagement. The change of use from commercial to hotel and leisure provides an opportunity to re-invigorate this significant building, and give public access to an important part of Sydney's history.
- The development site is located within one of three 'Potential Future Tower Cluster Areas', proposed within the draft Central Sydney Planning Strategy (CSPS), which was recently approved for public exhibition on Monday 11 March 2019. The uplift proposed by the CSPS for the area aligns with the existing and planned future development within the Barangaroo Precinct.

(ii) the existing and proposed uses and use mix,

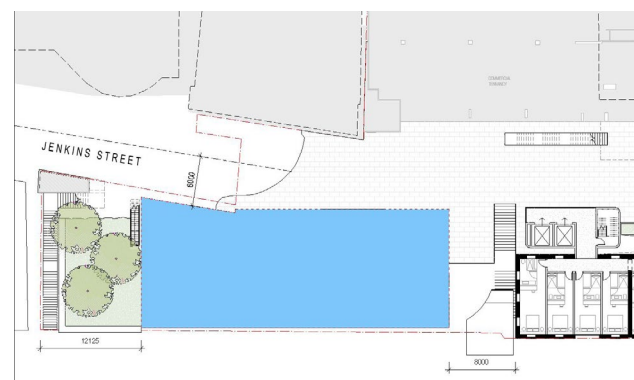
- The Grafton Bond Store is currently used as commercial offices. The change of use to the proposed hotel will re-invigorating this significant building through public engagement.
- The proposed boutique hotel is well situated to provide much needed supply of mid-level hotel accommodation in this precinct, providing an alternative to the high-level accommodation of neighbouring luxury hotels including The Langham in Kent Street, Park Hyatt in Hickson Road, and Crown Sydney at Barangaroo South.
- The existing gym underneath the plaza is to be converted from commercial to hotel use. The space will be retained as a gym but operated as part of the hotel.
- A portion of the privately-owned plaza will be converted to hotel use.

(iii) any heritage issues and streetscape constraints,

- The site includes the 'Grafton Bond Store and Sandstone Wall' at 60 Hickson Road, which are State Heritage Items (SHR 01431) under the NSW Heritage Act 1977, and listed in Schedule 5 of the Sydney Local Environment Plan (SLEP) 2012 (Item I1813).
- The site is also on the Section 170 Register of the Maritime Services Board (now Roads and Maritime Services) under the NSW Heritage Act 1977.
- The existing sandstone wall fronting Hickson Road provides challenges to the connectivity between the proposed development and Hickson Road. It is therefore proposed to form a new opening in this wall, to allow for a new hotel entry at ground level, and through-site link to Kent Street. A publicly accessible lift in the new hotel lobby will allow for equitable access between Hickson Road and the existing plaza.
- A vehicular drop-off for the new hotel will need to be considered in the upgrade of Hickson Road.
- Topography varies considerably across the site, resulting in complex circulation and access networks.

(iv) the location of any tower proposed, having regard to the need to achieve an acceptable relationship with other towers (existing or proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form,

- The proposed tower maintains a minimum separation of 8m from the Grafton Bond Store, 22m from 201-207 Kent Street, and 8.3m from 189 Kent Street.
- The proposed tower fits within the established urban form along Hickson Road, as defined by the neighbouring properties at no.s 30 and 38 Hickson Road.
- A light and air easement to the north of the proposed development has been maintained.
- The height of the new building does not impede significantly on views of the surrounding buildings.



Setbacks of proposed tower envelope

(v) the bulk, massing and modulation of buildings,

- The overall bulk and scale of the new hotel building fits within the established urban form along Hickson Road, as defined by the neighbouring properties at no.s 30 and 38 Hickson Road.
- The bulk and massing of the new hotel is broken into two distinct parts; the lower solid podium and glazed tower.
- The height of the proposed podium aligns with the parapet height of the Grafton Bond Store, and playfully reinterprets the varied roof form of the Grafton Bond Store.
- The modulation of window openings to the podium mirrors the size, shape and rhythm of the existing openings on the western facade of the Grafton Bond Store, expressed in a contemporary fashion.
- The proposed tower above has a contemporary glazed facade of uniform break ups, providing a contrast to the heavier podium base, and referencing the Kent Street commercial buildings behind.

(vi) street frontage heights

- The Hickson Road street frontage is dominated by the existing heritage sandstone wall to the north of the Grafton Bond Store, ranging in height from approximately 2 to 4m.
- The existing elongated west elevation of the Grafton Bond Store presents as a 4 and 5 storey building facing Hickson Road, and 3 storey facing Jenkins Street to the east. The street wall curves around the Napoleon Street corner to the south, at a uniform height to the west elevation.
- The western elevation of the proposed hotel podium continues the same setback from the western boundary as the Grafton Bond Store, maintaining a consistent alignment to the western street wall.
- The proposed podium presents as 4 stories above the sandstone wall to Hickson Road. Its overall heights and form reference the modulating parapeted gables and stepped gable parapets of the Grafton Bond Store, playfully reinterpreting this varied roof form.
- The maximum height of the proposed building is 30m, measured from natural ground (from top of the sandstone wall).

(vii) environmental impacts, such as sustainable design, overshadowing and solar access, visual and acoustic privacy, noise, wind and reflectivity,

- Sustainable design principles will be a core part of the proposed development as the project progresses, as a way of reducing environmental impacts, energy, water consumption, waste reduction, and long term operational costs for the hotel.
- Construction methodologies will be explored to create efficiencies of materials, waste, and longevity.
- Preliminary shadow studies demonstrate that the new tower building will have negligible impact to Hickson Road and the Grafton Bond Store, and minimal impacts to the surrounding environment.
- The guest rooms of the proposed hotel maximise the filtered western views to the harbour, thereby limiting privacy issues from adjacent buildings along Kent Street.
- Wind and reflectivity studies to be undertaken during the development of the design.

(viii) the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development,

- A framework will be established for the environmental sustainable design principles (ESD) for the proposed development. The intent of the ESD framework will be to:
 - reduce the environmental impacts of the demolition, refurbishment and construction of the hotel
 - set targets for energy and water efficiency for the project, and reduce reliance on non-renewable energy
 - increase the amenity for the guests through passive solar design, and provide a healthy indoor environment
 - reduce the long term operational costs for the hotel development
- The adaptive reuse of the Grafton Bond Store forms part of this strategy for reuse.

(ix) pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access and circulation requirements, including the permeability of any pedestrian network,

- The proposed through-site link ties into and improves upon the proposed East-West pedestrian connection strategy as identified in the Public Domain Structure Plan within the CSPA.
- The proposed through-site link also creates equitable public access from Hickson Road to Kent Street via an upgraded privately-owned plaza.
- The existing pedestrian stairs to the north of the site from Hickson Road to Jenkins Street will be maintained for public pedestrian access.
- The proposed development will utilise the existing vehicular access from Napoleon Street including the loading infrastructure, which will therefore not impact on the heritage items facing Hickson Road.

(x) the impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain,

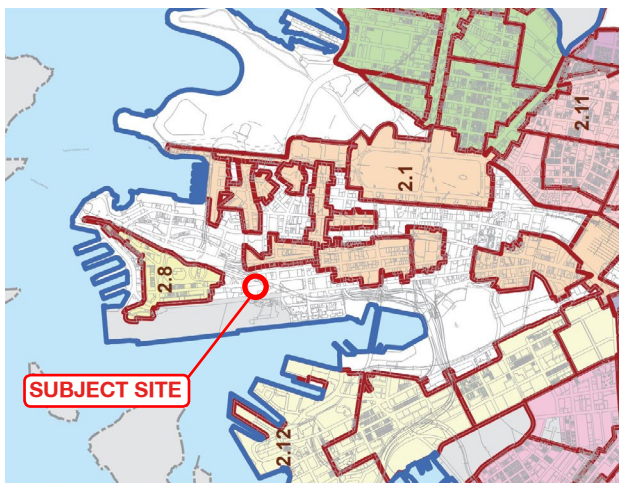
- The proposed through-site link creates equitable public access from Hickson Road to Kent Street via an upgraded privately-owned plaza.
- The proposal to convert the Hickson Road level of the Grafton Bond Store, from private commercial use to hospitality use, allows public interface to the interior of the state heritage-listed building, and activates the street frontage.
- The proposed through-site link provides new and enhanced opportunities for interaction between the public and the state heritage listed Grafton Bond Building.
- The existing privately-owned plaza to the east of the Grafton Bond Stores will be upgraded as part of the proposed development, therefore improving the public domain.
- The proposed development will sympathetically interface with the proposed upgrades along Hickson Road and Napoleon Street. Stone pavers will be carried into the hotel lobby at ground level to enhance this interface.

(xi) the impact on any special character area,

- The proposed development does not fall under any special character area within the City of Sydney, as indicated in the map of Special Character Areas below.

(xii) achieving appropriate interfaces at ground level between the building and the public domain,

- The proposal to convert the Hickson Road level of the Grafton Bond Store, from private commercial use to hospitality use, allows public interface to the interior of the state heritage-listed building, and activates the street frontage.
- The proposed through-site link provides new and enhanced opportunities for interaction between the public and the state heritage listed Grafton Bond Building.
- The proposed removal of the unsympathetic 1980's additions to the eastern elevation of the Grafton Bond Stores improves public access and appreciation of an important piece of Sydney's history.
- The proposed void in the new hotel at Jenkins Street allows views from plaza through to new hotel lobby space below.



(xiii) excellence and integration of landscape design

- High quality landscape design and public domain upgrades will form an integral part of the project as it develops.
- As part of the overall Lend Lease masterplan for Barangaroo, Hickson Road will be upgraded to include new road alignments, improved pedestrian amenity and pavements, street tree planting, bicycle routes, stormwater collection, and provision for potential future light rail.
- The existing plaza to the east of the Grafton Bond Stores is to be fully upgraded including new landscaping and public seating.
- A new landscape verge between plaza and eastern facade of Grafton Bond Building is proposed.
- New and upgraded landscaping is also proposed adjacent to the Jenkins Street staircase and the southern edge of plaza where escalators are currently.

1.2 Annex

Clause 6.21(4) of the SLEP 2012

(4) (a) whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved,

(4) (b) whether the form and external appearance of the proposed development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain,

(4) (c) whether the proposed development detrimentally impacts on view corridors,

(4) (d) how the proposed development addresses the following matters:

- i) the suitability of the land for development,
- ii) the existing and proposed uses and use mix,
- iii) any heritage issues and streetscape constraints,
- iv) the location of any tower proposed, having regard to the need to achieve an acceptable relationship with other towers (existing or proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form,

v) the bulk massing and modulation of buildings,

vi) street frontage heights

vii) environmental impacts, such as sustainable design, overshadowing and solar access, visual and acoustic privacy, noise, wind and reflectivity,

viii) the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development,

ix) pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access and circulation requirements, including the permeability of any pedestrian network,

x) the impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain,

xi) the impact on any special character area,

xii) achieving appropriate interfaces at ground level between the building and the public domain,

xiii) excellence and integration of landscape design

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