



DESIGN EXCELLENCE STRATEGY

Construction of a Mixed Use Development
including Commercial/Retail Uses and Hotel
Accommodation
42 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle NSW 2300



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Statement of Environmental Effects

FINAL

Report Reference No.: 19581
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Environmental Assessment

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In respect of: Doma Group

Application and Land Details

Applicant: Doma Group C/ - KDC Pty Ltd
Applicant Address: Unit 4/3 Sydney Avenue, Barton ACT 2604
Land to be developed: Lot 22, DP 1072217 – 42 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle NSW 2300
Project: Mixed use hotel and commercial office development

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the brief provided by our client and has relied upon the information collected at or under the times and conditions specified in the Report. All findings, conclusions or recommendations contained within the Report are based only on the aforementioned circumstances. Furthermore, the Report is for the use of the Client only and no responsibility will be taken for its use by other parties.



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

A Design Excellence Strategy (the Strategy) was established by Doma Group (Doma) for the proposed new mixed-use hotel and commercial office development located at 42 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle NSW 2300 (SSD-10378).

It is acknowledged that the proposal is classified as a State Significant Development (SSD), as the site is located in a state significant precinct (as identified in the State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011). The Secretary Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for 42 Honeysuckle Drive requires a design excellence strategy to be prepared in consultation with the Government Architect. The relevant SEAR is extracted below.

3. Design excellence

The EIS shall include a design excellence strategy prepared in consultation with the Government Architect NSW, demonstrating how the proposal will achieve design excellence. This strategy shall:

- + *identify the process to ensure that design excellence is achieved*
- + *demonstrate how comments from the Government Architect NSW have been addressed.*

This Strategy fulfils the requirements of the above SEAR. It is noted that the Government Architect NSW was consulted with on 11 November 2019, and a representative from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment was also in attendance.

1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The SSD proposal is for a part eight (8) storey and nine (9) storey mixed-use unique designed building which comprises several components. The main components of the development are commercial, hotel accommodation, retail and carparking, located at 42 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle (the site).

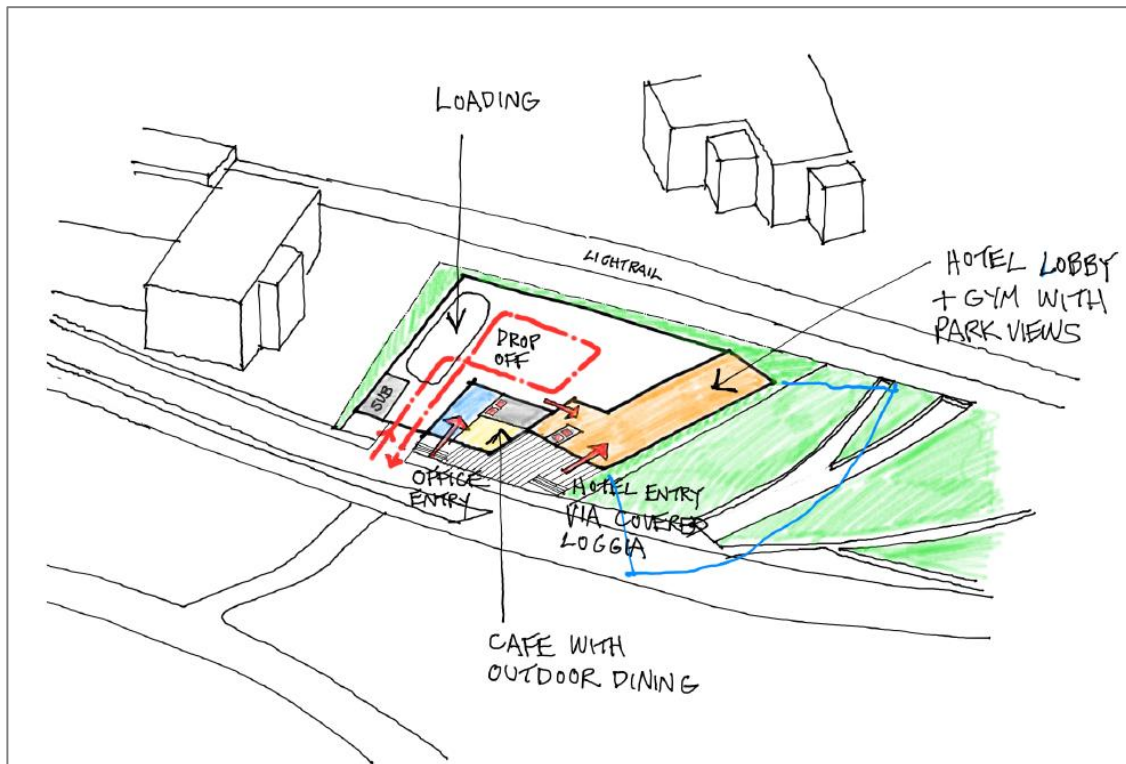
The significant characteristics of the proposal includes:

- + Hotel accommodation comprising of 179 hotel rooms spaced across seven (7) storeys;
- + Ground Floor retail premises with kitchen facilities and outdoor dining space;
- + Commercial office space offered across seven (7) storeys; and
- + 173 car parking spaces, associated with the uses on site, provided within the building.

The design of the proposal has been undertaken to complement the proposed landscaping as well as the surrounding existing built and natural form. The use of mid-range colours such as bronze cladding and dark metal balustrades allows the building to express its detail whilst blending seamlessly into the built environment.

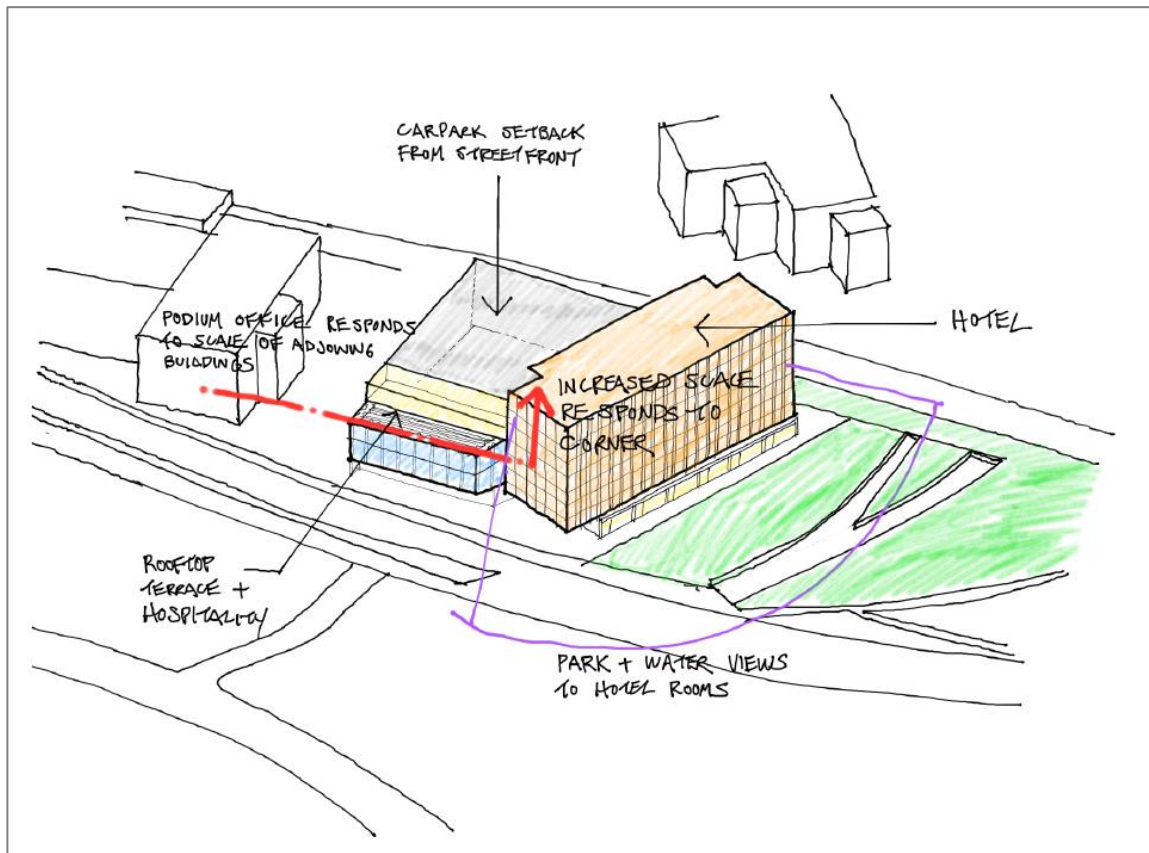
Figure 1 to Figure 3 illustrates the design concept for the SSD, demonstrating the arrangement for the ground floor plane, carpark and hotel and commercial respectively. The form of the building above the podium is split into two towers, rather than one U-shaped plan form, as approved under SSD 8440.

Figure 1 – Design Concept Ground Plan (Source: Bates Smart)



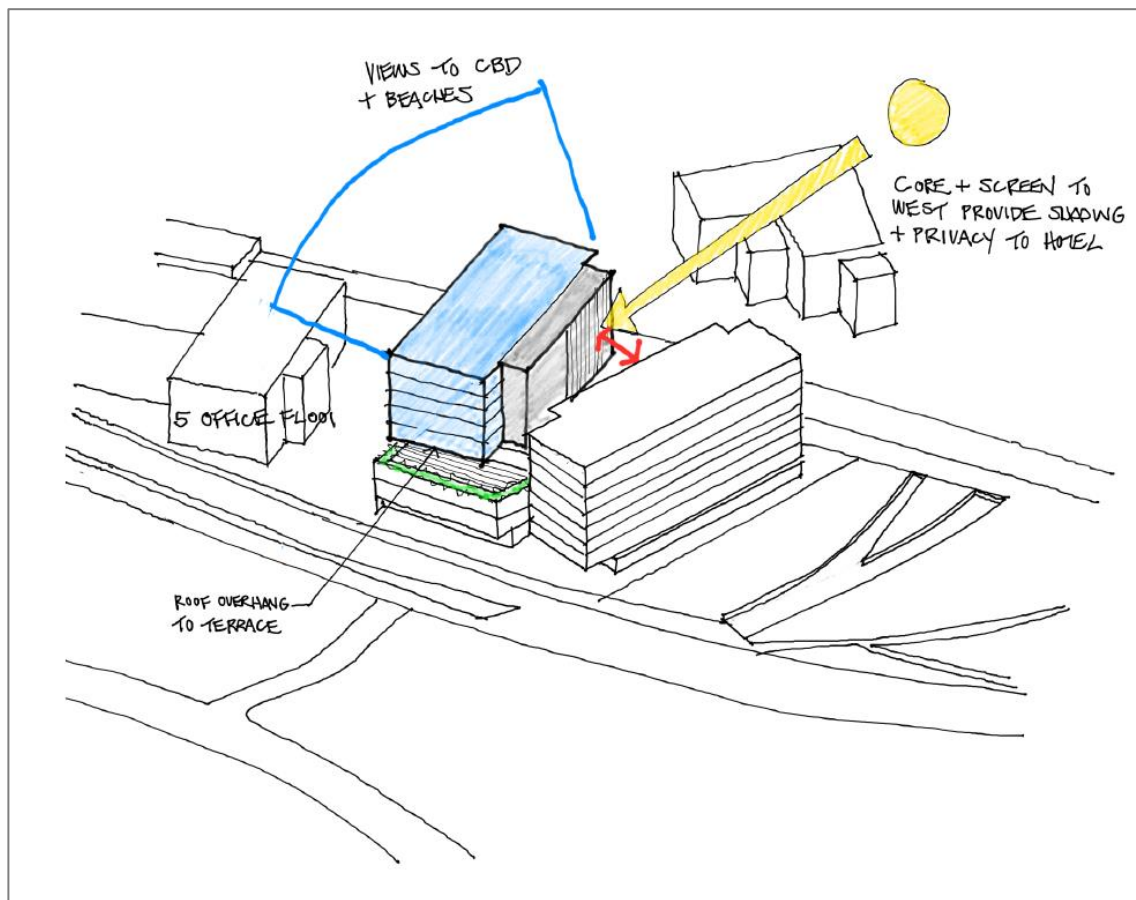
The hotel is located to the west of the site fronting Cottage Creek. It is entered via a covered loggia located on the prominent north west corner of the site. The hotel lobby and communal facilities extend south along the western frontage and enjoy a park outlook. The commercial office building is located to the east of the site. It has a combined lobby and café tenancy fronting Honeysuckle Drive with north facing outdoor dining. The carpark entry is to the east of the lobby off Honeysuckle Drive. The ground level and carpark are located above street level to comply with the flood level with ramps and stairs providing access off the street. Loading for service vehicles is located within the carpark in the south east corner of the site. A vehicle drop off facility for hotel guests is located off the carpark with direct access into the hotel lobby.

Figure 2 – Design Concept Carpark and Hotel (Source: Bates Smart)



The hotel reinforces the visually prominent north-west corner of the site. It has communal facilities located on the ground level with 7-level of accommodation over orientated to maximise the number of rooms with a park outlook. Along with the lower three levels of single loaded hotel rooms the ground level facilities 'sleeve' the western side of a 4-level above ground carpark. A 3-storey commercial podium 'sleeves' the carpark along Honeysuckle Drive and provides a north facing rooftop terrace for the hotel. The lower scale podium responds to the scale of adjoining buildings to the east.

Figure 3 – Design Concept Commercial (Source: Bates Smart)



A 5-storey commercial tower is located above the 4-storey carpark on the eastern side of the site. It has a simple rectilinear floor plate with a side core located to provide open flexible floor plates with good views of the Newcastle CBD to the east. The location of the service core to the west of the floor plate reduces heat load from low angle afternoon sun and will provide privacy to adjoining hotel rooms. The commercial tower cantilevers over the communal podium terrace to the north to provide covered outdoor space.

1.3 THE SITE

The site is described as 42 Honeysuckle Drive Newcastle, situated within the Local Government Area (LGA) of Newcastle. The site is legally described as Lot 22 DP 1072217. The site is undeveloped land, 3,728m² in area with a ground covering of low maintained grass. The site is under the ownership of Doma Group Pty Limited, who purchased the land from the Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation.

The site is a regular quadrilateral configuration, its boundaries shared with public space on three sides, being Honeysuckle Drive (north), public reserve (west), Light Rail Corridor (south) and private land that supports a three-storey commercial building to the immediate east.

The Newcastle Transport Interchange is located approximately 200 metres west of the site, with the new Light Rail Corridor extending along the rear, southern boundary of the site.

Figure 4 – Site Aerial (Source: Six Maps)





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2 PROJECT HISTORY AND DESIGN EVOLUTION

The scheme for 42 Honeysuckle Drive has been through numerous iterations and the design process has been a continuous evolution with Doma Group (proponent) and Bates Smart (architect) being consistent throughout the process. It is acknowledged that the land use elements and overall scheme has changed overtime, however the overall design intent for the site remains the consistent. Doma's objective for the site is to develop and deliver a usable and co-located hotel and commercial mixed-use development which provides point of different in the offering of the 'Little National Hotel.' The Little National is a business hotel aimed at providing accommodation in well positioned areas with high amenity offerings and smart luxury design.

The project history for 42 Honeysuckle Drive dates to 2017 when the then Hunter Development Corporation now known as the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) put the site to tender, seeking proposals for the sale and development of the site. The tender closed in February 2017 and DOMA were named as the successful applicants. Doma put forward a winning scheme which comprised of a nine (9) storey hotel and residential development plan (refer to Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Original tendered scheme 2017



SSD 8440 was lodged with the Department of Planning and Environment in 2018, which was granted approval on the 22 June 2018. The consent approved a part 9, part 10 storey mixed use development comprising ground floor retail premises, 148 room and 7 serviced apartment hotel, 52 residential apartments and 234 car spaces which included 25 public car spaces. The successful development design evolved from the original tendered scheme as shown with the approved design in Figure 6. The application sought to cater for the demand for residential and tourist accommodation within the Newcastle City Centre.

Figure 6 – Approved DA Scheme



Since the approval of SSD 8840, the market demand has changed, and residential developments are no longer the preference in Newcastle. The tourist sector in Newcastle is however continuously expanding, with events including the V8 Supercars attributing to the growth. As the tourist sector grows, the accommodation capacity needs to be aligned.

Given the change to market demand the hotel component is essential to the development for the site. SSD 10378 seeks to increase the number of hotel room in a direct consequence in the growth in the tourist sector. Furthermore, the project has analysed the future trends in the Newcastle region, and have identified that commercial office space is currently required in the area as well as into the future. Resulting the current proposal seeks to aid in filling this void, refer to Figure 7 and Figure 8.

Figure 7 – Proposed Scheme under SSD-10378



Figure 8 – Proposed Scheme under SSD-10378





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3 DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

3.1 SUMMARY

It is noted that the tendering process undertaken by the previous landowners to date, Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC), in the selection of a developer for the site required extensive review from a design review panel (DRP). The DRP comprised of Lee Hillam (Office of the Government Architect), Philip Pollard (Amenity Urban and Natural Environments) and Sue Anne Ware (University of Newcastle).

The tendering process followed the procedure as outlined in the Director General's Design Excellence Guidelines as follows:

- + Competition Initiation and Requirements: Three architectural/design firms were involved in the shortlisting of the design.
- + The Competition Brief: A brief was provided outlining the competition for the tendering process.
- + Design Competition Criteria: A minimum of three submissions were made in the tendering process.
- + The Competition Jury: The design was assessed and endorsed by a Design Review Panel.

As the tendering process for the sale of the site necessitated a design review panel, of which a representative of the Office of the Government Architect was a member of; it is considered that compliance with the Director General's Design Excellence Guidelines has been adhered to.

A previous waiver was issued on the 19 January 2019 by the Government Architects outlining that the Government Architect is satisfied that the design excellence process undertaken to date meets the objectives of the Newcastle LEP.

Since the original design, DOMA in consultation with HCCDC, have reviewed the approved scheme and in response to current market trends have increased the size of the hotel and revised the residential use to commercial office space. The proposal has been amended to accommodate the change in brief while seeking to remain consistent with the original design intent.

With that in mind it is proposed that the revised SSD application follow similar Design Review Panel process to that of the following the previously approved SSD. This direction was supported by the Government Architects on the 11 November 2019 at a briefing meeting attended by the project team and Rory Toomey, Principle of Design Excellence, GANSW.

The process undertaken has taken advantage of the existing design teams' extensive knowledge of the site and brief and lead to a high-quality design outcome for the site that. DOMA have worked collaboratively with the DRP throughout the process and met on 27 November 2019 for a formal presentation, the DRP comprises of the following representatives:

- + Lee Hillam – Dunn & Hillam Architects
- + Dr Philip Pollard – Amenity Urban & Natural Environments / Newcastle City Council's Urban Design Consultative Group Professor
- + Sue Anne Ware - Head of School, Architecture and Built Environment, University of Newcastle

Upon conclusion of the DRP briefing, it was agreed that it is not necessary to review this project again prior to the SSD submission as the DRP are satisfied that the project can proceed to SSD stage.

3.2 INCLUSION OF COMMENTS FROM DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

The below table outlines the comments received by the DRP and provides a response from the project team.

Table 1 – Comment and Response to DRP

DRP Comments, Notes and Queries	Response
<i>The revised form is an improvement on the previous schemes and is generally supported by the DRP. The revised maximum height and lower podium height can be supported by the DRP.</i>	Noted. The revised design seeks to improve the overall built form arrangement providing an improved amenity outcome for hotel guests and seeks to alter the land uses to cater for the market demand for commercial office space.
<i>The relationship between the building and the public park to the west is important and should be mutually beneficial. Current drawings are not clear on how the building responds to the park at the ground floor. It was recommended by the panel, that the architects should seek to design that ground floor interface in collaboration with the landscape designers.</i>	<p>Since the presentation with the DRP, the design team has revised the western façade to provide greater connection and relationship between the building and public.</p> <p>This has been addressed by creating a concrete colonnade with integrated planters that extends to the boundary to define a single level podium to the park. It provides a landscaped buffer between the hotel communal spaces and the public domain and a deep shaded overhang to the ground level facilities.</p>
<i>The effect of the building on the public domain in terms of the heat island effect should be carefully considered. This is particularly important on the western elevation where performance glass which will reflect heat from the internal spaces of the building will have an impact on the amenity of the public park</i>	<p>Since the presentation with the DRP, the design team has revised the western façade to provide greater connection and relationship between the building and public. In addition, the materials and finishes for the western façade have been explored further to review reflection of heat into the public park.</p> <p>Along the frontage of the park is an insitu concrete colonnade with integrated planters that extend to the boundary to define a single level podium to the park. It provides a landscaped buffer between the hotel communal spaces and the public domain and a deep shaded overhang to the ground level facilities. It also provides increase privacy and a landscaped outlook to hotel rooms on Level 1.</p>
<i>The design of the western elevation must also be carefully considered with regards to heat gain and amenity in those hotel rooms. It is understood that the large 'bay window' bed arrangement is a signature of the Little National Hotels, however it may be that a more site-specific response is needed here.</i>	<p>Since the presentation with the DRP, the design team has revised the western façade to provide greater connection and relationship between the building and public. In addition, the materials and finishes for the western façade have been explored further to review reflection of heat into the public park and explore the internal amenity in respect to heat gain.</p> <p>Western Façade Treatment A gridded pattern formed by both the vertical and horizontal frame, the alternating pattern of vertical screens and openings provides an articulated façade with depth and texture while providing an optimal sun shading solution.</p>

DRP Comments, Notes and Queries	Response
<p>The accessibility ramp should be reconsidered, to achieve access that more naturally integrates disabled access with stairs and entry ways.</p>	<p>Since the presentation with the DRP, the accessibility ramp position has been explored further, however given the flooding risk on-site the proposed location is the only position to fulfil civil design requirements.</p> <p>A covered ramp length has been increased along the western edge of the site. At the “switch back” there is level access and an opportunity to enter the lobby space through a compliant door or using the circular sliding doors facing Honeysuckle Drive.</p>
<p>Questions were asked about the impact of wind on the podium top terrace, especially with regards to the funnel shape of the plan.</p>	<p>The impact of wind on the podium top terrace, especially with regards to the funnel shape of the plan are being investigated further and mitigation devices will be put in place.</p>
<p><i>The southern elevation faces directly to the light rail line, with no pedestrian, private vehicle or bicycle routes along that side. However, this elevation still must be considered when viewed from the light rail and from the path coming across from Hunter St. The composition is generally acceptable however it appears very unactivated, due to the position of car parks, end walls of hotel rooms etc.</i></p>	<p>The revised design seeks to improve the overall built form arrangement providing an improved amenity outcome for hotel guests and seeks to alter the land uses to cater for the market demand for commercial office space.</p> <p>The proposal seeks to provide a green wall on the southern façade to provide a more interesting façade from the light rail. It is acknowledged that the design seeks to the south-western façade as this interface will be highly visible to pedestrians given the provision of the bicycle route.</p>
<p><i>The planting scheme for the car park was supported, DRP noting that UTS have done some good research on appropriate plants for this use.</i></p>	<p>Noted. Bates Smart in conjunction with the landscape architect have reviewed different plant species and have landed on numerous different species as shown below:</p>

DRP Comments, Notes and Queries	Response
<div><p>GREEN WALL PLANTING - southern aspect</p><div><p><i>Bergonia</i> spp.</p></div><div><p><i>Hoya australis</i></p></div><div><p><i>Monstera deliciosa</i></p></div><div><p><i>Cissus antarctica</i></p></div><p>GREEN WALL PLANTING - eastern aspect</p><div><p><i>T. jasminoides</i></p></div><div><p><i>Kennedia rubicunda</i></p></div><div><p><i>Hibbertia scandens</i></p></div><div><p><i>Pandorea jasminoides</i></p></div></div>	

4 SUMMARY

The proposal will lead to a good built outcome on the site and will contribute positively to the Newcastle CBD.

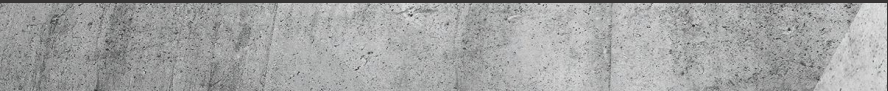
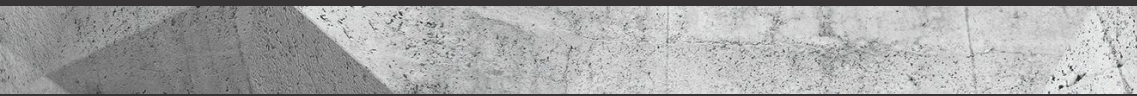
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DOMA have continually work collaboratively with the Design Review Panel (DRP) throughout the process and gained their endorsement.

KDC look forward to Government Architect endorsing the design excellence process described above, allowing the application and ultimate development to progress.



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