

File No:
2021/09696/01

9 March 2022

Ref No:
18425457

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For the attention of the State Commission Assessment Panel

207 Pulteney Street, Adelaide

The following advice is in relation to the proposed development at 207 Pulteney Street, Adelaide (Application 21042343). In my capacity as a mandatory referral in the State Commission Assessment Panel, I would like to offer the following comments for your consideration.

The proposal was presented to the Design Review panel on three occasions. I acknowledge the project team's positive engagement with Design Review, and I commend the thorough submission that clearly demonstrates the design intent. I also acknowledge the project team's early engagement with specialist consultants, which in my view will be critical in the successful resolution of the scheme including its environmental performance, internal amenity and architectural expression.

The proposal is for a 55 level (approximately 180 metre tall) mixed-use development that comprises ground floor lobby and public dining spaces, basement and podium level car parking, Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) apartments, conference facilities, hotel accommodation, residential apartments, and a range of shared use amenity spaces.

I am of the opinion that any development on this significant corner site has a responsibility to deliver an exemplary civic contribution to the city. The proposal also has the potential to become a benchmark for future development of this scale, which reinforces the importance of achieving design excellence. My ongoing support for the proposal is contingent on the project team's continued commitment to and delivery of the envisaged exemplary environmental outcome.

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Context

The subject site is located on the southwest corner of Pulteney and Flinders Streets and currently comprises a three storey office building and at grade car park. An approximately three metre wide easement exists along the southern boundary providing access to the neighbouring development. The existing built form character of the locality is mixed, and generally comprises multi-storey office buildings up to ten storeys tall and two storey tall commercial premises. The Local heritage listed St Paul's Church is located diagonally opposite the site on the northeast corner of the intersection. Pulteney and Flinders Streets are both major north-south and east-west thoroughfares carrying high volumes of traffic and public transport.

I recognise the opportunities presented by this scheme and the concept of a vertical community. I also note that a development of this scale will introduce a large residential and hotel guest population into a historically lower density commercial part of the city.



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Given the scale of the building, the proposal will also likely become a catalyst that changes the fundamental nature of the precinct.

City form

I acknowledge the city form and contextual analysis that illustrates historic, current and envisaged future height distribution based on approved developments and planning policy, which allows for unlimited building height. This analysis indicates a tendency towards built form that uniformly maximises building height at the limit set by current Airports (Protection of Airspace) Regulations. The proposal seeks to exceed this height threshold, with the view to establishing a city form with a bell curve profile. I acknowledge the approvals process at a Federal level that validates the proposed building height from an Airports (Protection of Airspace) Regulations perspective. I also acknowledge the provision of perspective views that illustrate the visual impact of the proposed building height in long distant city view perspectives and from a pedestrian scale.

I recognise the proposal has the potential to change the epicenter of the tallest buildings in Adelaide, which are currently located centrally within the CBD proximate to King William Street and more recently on the corner of North Terrace and Pulteney Street. I also acknowledge the precinct diagram and walkability assessment that locates key city destinations proximate to the development, and I recognise the potential benefits arising from the introduction of a significant residential population, mixed use activity and a tourism destination in this part of the city.

Built form massing

The proposed built form massing comprises a podium and sheer glazed tower form, separated by a set back transition element. Two large recesses articulate the tower form and are activated by shared amenity spaces. The east and west elevations are articulated by full height vertical recesses. The overall building height is approximately 180 metres.

I support the proposed built form massing, which in my view results in a slender and well-proportioned tower form. I also recognise that a development of this scale will become a major landmark for the city and benchmark future development, and with this comes a civic responsibility to deliver an exceptional design outcome. My ongoing support for a building of this scale is contingent on the project team's continued commitment to the project's exemplary environmental credentials, particularly in relation to the facade performance, through the next stage of design development and project delivery.

Ground plane and public realm

The ground floor level is set back 2.3 metres from Flinders and Pulteney Streets to increase the width of the public realm, improve pedestrian amenity and maximise activation opportunities. Public realm works also include new street trees and paving along Flinders and Pulteney Streets, which I understand will be coordinated with the City of Adelaide. A series of landscaped planters with integrated seating are proposed along the boundary edge to frame the main entrances and create a transitional outdoor space between the street and the glazed ground floor facade. Consistent high quality paving finishes, including sandstone paving bands, are proposed internally and externally to expand the ground plane's sense of space and volume and blur the boundary between the public realm and ground floor level.

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I support the approach for a tall, transparent, permeable and public ground plane, and the works beyond the site boundary that improve the existing streetscape conditions. I also support the provision of separate entrances and vertical circulation cores for the different user groups, and the consideration given to distinguishing the identity of the building entrances through a vertical green wall (hotel) and double height SOHO outdoor terrace (residential).

The ground floor west facade is set back to provide a covered porte cochere for hotel drop-off and access to the above-ground car parking. The porte cochere features landscaping, seating, bulkhead/soffit treatments and lighting that visually connect this space to the hotel entry foyer/lounge. The west facade is also set back and fully glazed to provide passive surveillance and natural light. I support the proposed porte cochere, which provides a high quality arrival experience, convenient access to hotel check in and generous gathering and circulation spaces. I also acknowledge the development of the traffic and access strategy through the Design Review process, which has sought to mitigate potential conflicts between pedestrians, cars, bicycles, deliveries and services/waste truck movements. I anticipate traffic management systems will be established by the hotel operator to further mitigate congestion and potential vehicular conflicts.

I support the refined palette of high quality materials proposed for the ground plane and public realm, which in my view reflect the ambitions for the development and contribute positively to the public realm. My ongoing support for the proposal is contingent on the project team's continued commitment to high quality ground plane and public realm material selections and landscaping through the next stage of design development and project delivery.

Podium

The podium is approximately 37 metres tall, with the view to referencing existing buildings of this scale within the precinct. Above the set back ground floor level, the podium extends to all four boundaries to create a defined corner and street wall presentation.

Level 1 of the podium comprises car parking, hotel/residential loading areas and Back of House, apartment storage and bike parking with change room facilities. Levels 2 to 7 accommodate car parking and double height SOHO apartments that extend along the full Pulteney Street frontage and part of the Flinders Street frontage. A double height shared terrace is located centrally on the eastern frontage on level 6. Levels 8 and 9 are full car parking levels, and conference facilities are located on level 10.

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Key features of the podium design include tall, fully glazed and highly transparent set back ground floor frontages, four and six storey tall building entrances featuring vertical landscaping, a highly glazed street corner (comprising SOHO apartments), bronze horizontal projections providing sun shading, bronze vertical blade screening to car parking, and a fully glazed conference facilities level at the top of the podium. A stone ribbon canopy element extends along both street frontages, and wraps up to frame the two main entrances. Secondary glazed canopies are also proposed, providing additional weather protection over the entrances. A band of bronze metal cladding is proposed above the stone canopy, which wraps up the western edge of the building and frames the top of the podium.

I support the project team's emphasis on the importance of the podium including its contribution to the streetscape and pedestrian experience. I also support the scale of the podium, which in my view responds positively to existing built form within the locality. Additionally, I support the proposed high quality material selections, which in my view are refined and sophisticated.



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I anticipate further refinement of the podium design and detailing through the next stage of design development, and encourage testing of an alternative cladding material above the sandstone canopy, with the view to enhancing the quality of the stone and reinforcing the expression of the bronze tower soffits.

My ongoing support for the proposal is contingent on the project team's continued commitment to high quality material selections and vertical greening through the next stage of design development and project delivery.

Above-ground car parking

The podium accommodates nine levels of above-ground car parking. I support the partial sleeving of car parking with SOHO apartments and the floor-to-floor dimension and construction methodology that allows for future adaptive reuse. I also acknowledge the project team's comments regarding the feasibility and cost of additional basement levels, which I understand have been informed by the structural and civil consultants. Notwithstanding this, my consistent view for city developments is that above-ground car parking restricts opportunities for genuine engagement with the public realm.

Deep vertical blades are proposed to screen car parking, provide natural ventilation and articulate the podium facade. While I acknowledge this design intent, effective screening of vehicles and car park infrastructure in day and nighttime conditions has not yet been fully demonstrated. I anticipate facade detailing will be developed in the next project phase, and recommend that the final design of the car park facade be submitted in due course to demonstrate effective screening of vehicles, headlights and car park infrastructure, as well as storage and bike parking abutting the facade.

Tower

The tower comprises hotel rooms on levels 13 to 20, apartments on levels 22 to 50 and penthouses on levels 51 to 53. Communal amenity spaces are located in the large built form recesses. These include a double height hotel amenities space located on level 11 and a triple height shared residential terrace located on level 21. A 'sky lounge' is also proposed on level 50. Roof mounted plant is proposed, which is set back from all boundaries to minimise its visual impact.

The tower expression is envisaged as a singular and slender form comprising sheer, high performance, thermally broken curtainwall glazing that is expressed consistently in the round. I understand the glazing selection is envisaged to be reflective silver with a minimal blue hue, as depicted in the visualisations. Integrated awning windows are proposed to habitable rooms and the winter gardens.

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I acknowledge the ambition for a uniform, sheer glazed tower and I support the aspiration to deliver a distinctive residential development that sets a new benchmark for design quality and amenity.

I strongly support the engagement of a specialist ESD consultant and facade engineers in the early stage of design development. I also support the detailed technical modelling that has been undertaken throughout the Design Review process to assess the building performance, facade heat loading and daylight penetration in different weather conditions. Additionally, I support the integrated approach to ventilation requirements for services through use of glazed louvres, which are located on the non-street frontages (west and south elevations).



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In my view, the environmental, technical and architectural qualities of the facade and its response to Adelaide's climate will be critical to the success of the scheme both from an internal amenity and external appearance perspective. To this end, I strongly recommend ongoing engagement with specialist consultants to ensure the successful resolution and delivery of the technical and performance aspects of the tower and an exemplary design outcome for this highly prominent development.

Communal amenity spaces

I support the provision of a mix of communal and publicly accessible amenity spaces distributed throughout the development including an outdoor terrace associated with the SOHO apartments (level 6), a hotel amenity terrace (level 11), a communal residential terrace (level 21), an additional west facing communal residential terrace (level 41) and a 'sky lounge' (level 50).

I acknowledge the design development of the SOHO shared terrace through the Design Review process, including the consideration given to its location. In my view, the double height terrace on the east facade improves the amenity of the SOHO lobby and corridor space, makes the community area visible and accessible both internally and externally, and contributes to the activation of the podium.

The double height hotel amenity terrace is located on level 11 on the top of the podium. This level features a restaurant fronting onto Flinders and Pulteney Streets, a pool and spa located along the western boundary and a wellbeing studio with associated outdoor terrace, amenities and restaurant kitchen located to the south. I acknowledge the design development of the terrace spaces through the Design Review process, including the increased depth of the northern terrace (to 4.5 metres) and the consideration given to maximising the amenity of the terraces through landscape and canopies for wind and sun protection. I also support the internal layout that locates active uses along the southern facade (wellbeing/studio, kitchen and restaurant) and the extension of the main lobby to provide direct access and outlook to the southern terrace. In my view, this creates a sense of transparency and connection between the north and south terraces and optimises views to the Adelaide Hills.

The triple height communal residential terrace is located on level 21. This level features a communal lounge, cinema room, shared kitchen and dining area, kids play area and a landscape terrace with a variety of seating areas. The west facing residential terrace on level 21 features landscaped planters, a variety of seating areas and a bookable multi-function room. In my view, the consideration given to the mix of activities and high-quality finishes have the potential to enrich the user experience and contribute to the overall quality and value of the development. Apartments also overlook and interact with this space, which I support.

I support the envisaged high quality material selections and landscaping for the communal amenity spaces, as evident in the visualisations and landscape plans. I also support the integration of mitigation measures to protect the amenity of the outdoor spaces in relation to wind. My ongoing support for the proposal is contingent on the project team's continued commitment to these high quality finishes through the next stage of design development and project delivery.

Private Open Space

Private open space for all apartments and 30% of the hotel rooms is provided in the form of winter gardens, which are integrated into the curtainwall glazed facade. The winter gardens are ventilated by integral 1.6 metre tall top hung awning windows with an opening aperture of 500mm. These awning windows sit above 1.1 metre tall fixed glazing forming a balustrade. The same awning window system is also proposed for habitable rooms, with a smaller opening aperture of 125mm.

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I understand the environmental performance of the tower facade and the usability of private open space at high levels informs the approach for winter gardens. I also understand technical facade and energy modelling has been undertaken to test the thermal performance of the winter gardens and daylight penetration to the interfacing habitable rooms, with positive results.

In principle, I support the provision of private outdoor space for all apartments and 30% of the hotel rooms, and the intent to maximise the usability and flexibility of these spaces. I also acknowledge the provision of a range of high quality communal outdoor spaces to supplement shortfalls in quantitative private open space requirements.

I acknowledge the challenges in accommodating operable facades at higher building levels, including the management of significant wind pressures, as well as the thermal performance and constructability issues. Additionally, I recognise the potential of the awning windows to activate and contribute to the overall architectural expression of the tower facade.

However, given the internal nature of the winter gardens and limited ventilation, I am concerned that these spaces will operate and feel like indoor rather than genuine private outdoor spaces. Through the next stage of design development, I recommend detailed consideration of the winter garden interior to reinforce a semi-outdoor experience. This may include consideration of flush thresholds, external floor finishes and the provision of services to support soft landscaping in these spaces. I also recommend testing dual awning windows above the fixed glazed balustrade to increase the percentage of operable facade/natural ventilation, cognisant of potential window framing impacts on sight lines.

Internal planning – Hotel

I support the refinement of the hotel room planning through the Design Review process including the introduction of winter gardens to 30% of the suites. I also support the introduction of natural light, outlook, and ventilation to the central lift lobbies via full height south facing windows. I anticipate further resolution of the hotel design will occur in the next stage of design development in collaboration with the eventual operator.

Internal planning – Apartments

I support the approach for a mix of residential typologies and the intent to minimise south facing apartments. I also acknowledge the refinement of apartment planning through the Design Review process.

I anticipate apartment planning will be further refined in the next project phase, and encourage ongoing consideration of the quality and usability of principle living spaces. I also recommend further testing of the proportions of winter gardens, which appear to be impacting on the quality of some internal living areas.

I support the provision of natural light, outlook and ventilation to the central lift lobbies via full height south facing windows. I also support the provision of double height resident lounge spaces at the end of the lift lobby corridors, which enhance occupant amenity and the arrival experience. Additionally, I support the purposeful use of the east and west built form recesses as residential winter gardens.

I support the refinement of the penthouse level lobbies through the Design Review process, including the introduction of a full height south facing window. In my view, this arrangement reflects the high quality and unique accommodation offer.

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Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)

I support the ESD strategy for the development including the high performance facade informed by 'Passive House' standards, the all-electric servicing and inset energy network allowing for 100% renewable energy supply, the centralised approach to air conditioning and heat recovery ventilation system, rainwater capture and reuse for on-site irrigation and the post-pandemic and health and wellbeing considerations. I also support the intent to verify the building performance through WELL, NatHERS (average 8 star) and Green Star As-Built (6 star) certification.

I strongly recommend ongoing collaboration with specialist consultants to ensure the successful delivery of the ESD strategy. I also strongly recommend ongoing commitment to the ESD strategies, including on-site performance testing through the construction, commissioning and handover stages of the project, and formal certification.

I trust the above comments assist in making your assessment. To support delivery of the project ambition and to ensure the most successful design outcome is achieved, the State Commission Assessment Panel may like to consider conditions or reserved matters to protect the following elements of the proposal, as design details are produced in due course:

- final external material selections and finishes (including physical samples)

Yours sincerely



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