

File No:
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For the attention of the State Commission Assessment Panel

8 Hocking Place, Adelaide

The following advice is in relation to Development Application 24042402. In my capacity as a referral body for advice, I would like to offer the following comments for your consideration.

The proposal is for a 14 storey (approximately 46.3 metres excluding lift overrun), mixed-use development comprising ground floor communal spaces and 13 levels of residential apartments proposed as 100 percent affordable housing. I strongly support the aspirations including the sustainability and social initiatives of the project in an accessible part of the city.

The proposal was not presented to the Design Review Panel, however was discussed at two Pre-lodgement Panel meetings attended by referral agencies including an ODASA Design Advisor.

I acknowledge the amendments and design development to the proposal during the pre-lodgement process to address the issues raised, including:

- affordable housing increased from 15 to 100 percent
- reconfiguration of the ground floor including:
 - change of use on the ground floor from commercial to communal spaces for resident amenity
 - setback ground floor from the south boundary to create a footpath for safe pedestrian movement to the lobby
 - inclusion of consultant room for convenient access to services for residents
- reconfiguration of apartment upper floor layout (levels ten to 13) to optimise north orientation
- refinement of the architectural expression and material palette:
 - podium expressed through change in materiality
 - inclusion of glass block walls to the north facade
 - openings to the east balconies and inclusion of windows to the east facade.

I strongly support the provision of 100 percent affordable housing and recognise the benefit the increased daily population could bring to the precinct. In my view, the protection of the sustainability ambitions will be critical to realising the potential of this scheme and justifying the proposed building height.

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Site Context

The site is located in the south-west quarter of Adelaide, at the southeast corner of Whitmore Square. The 250 square metre rectangular shaped site has an approximately 27.4 metre frontage to Hocking Place (south) and nine metre frontages to Whitmore Square (west) and the public road (east).

Hocking Place is an approximately 4.5-metre-wide two-way street without footpaths that extends to Hocking Court, Evans Place and the public road, which are dead-end access roads. The existing single-storey commercial building on site includes chamfered corners to the southeast and southwest, is proposed to be demolished.

The north boundary is shared with the adjacent 4.5 storey affordable eco-housing development configured as three wings with basement car parking. The built form is setback from its east and adjoining boundaries, however a canopy projects over the open-air staircase and extends to the shared boundary. The site to the east comprises a four storey tall residential development on the corner of the public road and Hocking Place, orientated/north south. The remaining surrounding context is varied with a mix of building typologies and heights ranging from six storey apartment buildings (Sturt Street) to single storey cottages and townhouses. The wider locality includes a large apartment building (22 storeys) to the north of Whitmore Square, mid-rise apartment buildings and commercial developments. State and Local Heritage Places exist to the south of the site, including single and two storey buildings that include social services provided by the Salvation Army. A previous approval exists on the subject site for an eight storey (approximately 28 metre) boutique apartment building.

The site is located on the edge of the Capital City Zone and City Frame Sub-Zone where planning policy envisages developments up to 29 metres. The subject site adjoins the City Living Zone and Medium-High Intensity Sub-Zone, where developments up to 14 metres are envisaged.

I recognise the benefits afforded by this corner site, including its adjacency with complementary uses, proximity to the city centre and aspect towards Whitmore Square.

Building height and built form composition

The proposed building height is 46.3 metres (excluding lift overrun), which exceeds the maximum envisaged height of 29 metres for the site (and the 30 percent additional height afforded by provision of affordable housing).

The proposed singular built form seeks to define a four storey base/podium through a change in materiality, with the intent to reflect the height of the adjacent development to the north. The ground floor is set back 1.5 metres from the south boundary and includes a chamfered corner (southeast). Levels one to 13 extend to all boundaries.

I acknowledge the challenges presented by the orientation, depth and limited area of the site and constrained road network. I support the proposed building height on balance, as I accept that a building height exceeding 29 metres may be appropriate in the Whitmore Square context. I also acknowledge the intent to satisfy specific over-height criteria, including 'substantial additional gain in sustainability'.

In addition, I support the following aspects of the built form composition:

- set back base and colonnade with chamfered southeast corner that seeks to contribute to the public realm and provide shelter
- 3.5 metre ground floor ceiling height that supports flexible use

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- podium scale and articulation that responds to the existing streetscape scale
- upper level shift in floorplan and window placement/balcony openings that articulate the built form massing, create gaps and voids to break down the visual bulk, and minimise the visual impact of the over height portion of the development.

Ground plane and public realm

I support the following aspects of the proposed ground plane:

- activation of the primary and secondary frontages supported by high levels of visual permeability and passive surveillance to the residential entry
- ground floor built form setback that seeks to facilitate clear sight lines and has the potential to contribute to the quality of the public realm
- provision of canopies/undercroft colonnade for pedestrian shelter to the west and south that reinforces the development's sense of address
- glazed fronted fire booster that supports visual permeability of the facade
- communal area (including accessible amenities) and consultant room to provide amenity and services for residents
- services located to the rear of the site and integration of the metal screens/roller doors into the podium form and expression.

In my opinion, the opportunity exists to reconfigure the fire egress strategy and location of the vertical circulation core, to provide direct access between the communal area and lobby and create a connected and genuinely active frontage.

I also encourage ongoing collaboration with the City of Adelaide to explore opportunities for extending and upgrading the street verge and Hocking Place to include consistent paving and promote a shared environment.

Architectural Expression and Materiality

The proposed podium/base is characterised by:

- ground floor:
 - o full height glazing and operable doors (west and south to the communal area, consultant room and lobby)
 - o perforated metal screen/roller door and solid wall with artwork (east and southeast corner)
 - o projecting canopy with scalloped profile extending over the Whitmore Square footpath (painted steel to match 'red' balustrades) and proposed to extend as a ribbon, wrapping around the entire building, including the soffit of the colonnade
- glazed blue brick facades and columns (excluding the central portion of the north facade) including scalloped profiles to the vertical band and spandrels of levels one and four (west only)
- feature handrail to balcony balustrades that extend around the building, interrupted between varying vertical elements across elevations (precast concrete in an ochre/red colour 'boral colori')
- integrated planters to the balconies on level four including one 'extended planter box to provide extra greenery' shown beyond the bedroom window (west).

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The upper portion of the building is characterised by:

- precast concrete with integrated off-white colour (Brighton lite), generally horizontally expressed ('repeatable precast concrete formal language')
- grey glazing in a range of window sizes featuring:
 - o north: vertically expressed, fire-rated glass block windows
 - o east: high-level horizontally expressed windows
 - o south: 'L' shaped and narrow windows



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- west: consistent vertically expressed windows and balcony openings including integrated blinds to the bedrooms
- glazed balustrades with precast concrete lintel/handrail (ochre/red colour 'boral colori').

Each elevation is distinctively expressed, however consistent design elements feature throughout including precast concrete lintels in a contrasting feature colour.

In principle, I support the design approach that responds to each orientation. This includes consideration given to the expression of the north facade/boundary and fire compliance, particularly inclusion of the glass block windows and orientation of balconies on levels 11 to 13, that in my opinion assist in breaking down the mass of the building.

I also support the following elements of the architectural expression:

- approach to draw inspiration from the surrounding context in relation to proposed material selections, which achieve a durable and contextual outcome
- inclusion of a podium with mass and robust expression that grounds the development
- lighter weight expression for the upper building element
- early consideration given to building detailing, including the window proportions, integrated blind system and lintel element that provides facade articulation.

While I typically advocate for integral finishes, on balance, I support the painted steel finish which only occurs minimally at ground level.

To optimise the architectural expression, I recommend review and confirmation of the following:

- resolution of conflicts between south facing windows and kitchen cabinetry and internal walls
- consideration of additional glazing to the east elevation to increase articulation, and improve amenity and outlook
- confirmation of:
 - operability of bedroom windows
 - details of 'geometric patterning' to the north boundary wall
 - inclusion of high-level windows to the east living areas (shown in elevation but not in plan).

I support the inclusion of planter boxes to balcony balustrade edges, which seek to soften the architectural expression and provide amenity for the building occupants. I recommend confirmation of the projecting planter (west) including its depth, the location of operable windows and access for watering and maintenance.

In my view, the quality of the materiality and detailing is critical to the success of the project and its integration into the precinct. To this end, 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.

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Residential Amenity

A total of 36 residential apartments are proposed, comprising 30 one-bedroom apartments on levels one to ten, and six two-bedroom apartments on levels 11 to 13. I support the mix and variety of apartments proposed as 100 percent affordable housing and the provision of communal space on ground level with outlook to Whitmore Square.



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In general, I support the efficient planning of apartments and well-proportioned terraces with provision of hanging bike storage. In particular, I support the configuration of apartments to provide living areas with northern aspect on levels 11 to 13.

To optimise resident amenity, I recommend further consideration of the following aspects of the design:

- confirmation of operable windows for bedrooms
- consideration of additional planters to further improve residential amenity and add to the architectural expression
- inclusion of accessible apartments.

I recommend confirmation of a formal agreement with the relevant authority to demonstrate the commitment to delivery of affordable housing outcomes as envisaged.

While I acknowledge the actual impact of overlooking may be somewhat limited, I am concerned by the lack of management strategy for perceived overlooking to the existing and potential future residential properties to the east and south. I recommend consideration given to innovative means to control view angles from upper levels, balanced with protection of internal residential amenity.

Services and Waste

The site configuration locates services, waste storage and loading in the rear (eastern) portion of the site. I recognise the rationale for locating the air conditioning units on balconies to reduce the extent of rooftop plant and their locations generally positioned behind solid facades to screen them from view. I recommend confirmation of the extent of the lift overrun, which does not appear to be indicated.

The residential waste disposal strategy requires residents to individually transfer waste from their apartments to the waste store. I acknowledge the intent to utilise the Council's waste collection services, utilising 'rear-lift' waste collection via Hocking Place, which is consistent with the existing arrangement for neighbouring residential properties. I note the traffic and waste reports appear to be based on previous drawings that may require updating.

Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)

I support the engagement of a sustainability consultant and integration of Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) strategies including the following notable initiatives:

- achieving 7.5 Star NatHERS rating (when averaged across all dwellings)
- all-electric building
- 100 percent renewable electricity
- minimum 15kW system of solar panels
- high-performance double glazing to reduce heat ingress and include shading and integrated blinds to control glare and indoor environmental quality.

I support the aspirations to incorporate sustainable features into the development and acknowledge the efficiency of the design that improves the performance of the building. I also support the project team's consideration of passive design techniques including deep balconies providing integral shading, thermal massing (precast concrete construction), and natural light and ventilation. Other supported features include solar panels for energy production and rainwater harvesting.

I also acknowledge the importance of the social sustainability outcomes with the provision of 100 percent affordable housing that contributes to demonstrating a measure of 'substantial additional gain' to support the additional building height.

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I strongly recommend ongoing commitment to the ESD strategies and exploration of opportunities to include any additional measures to underpin the environmental credentials of the project. I also encourage careful consideration of the visual impact and durability of integrated blinds during the next stage of development, with the view to providing high quality finishes and a uniform visual outcome.

Summary

To ensure the most successful design outcome is achieved the SCAP may like to consider particular aspects of the project, which would benefit from protection as part of the planning permission, such as:

- final external material selections, including confirmation of high-quality integral finishes supported by the provision of physical samples
- confirmation of the proposed plant species, size, soil volume/depth and irrigation requirements for planter beds
- consideration of a formal agreement with the relevant authority to confirm the delivery of affordable housing outcomes
- consideration of management strategy for perceived overlooking to the east and south.

Yours sincerely



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