

File No:
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22665751

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For the attention of the State Commission Assessment Panel

290 Unley Road, Hyde Park

The following advice is in relation to Development Application 24037925. In my capacity as a referral body for advice, I would like to offer the following comments for your consideration.

The project was not presented to the Design Review panel. From considering the material supplied with the referral and evaluating the design merit of the project, I am pleased to offer my general support to the planning application. However, in my view, the proposal would benefit from refinement of the residential entry arrangement, with the view to improve amenity and a sense of arrival.

The proposal is for a five-storey tall mixed use development comprising ground floor commercial tenancy, four levels of residential apartments, and at-grade car parking.

Site context

The site is located on the western side of Unley Road, on the south corner of Esmond Street. It extends from Unley Road to a private shared lane at the rear, with a depth of 42.67 metres, and a width of 15.77 metres.

The site is located within the Urban Corridor Zone (Main Street Sub Zone), with the boundary of the adjacent Established Neighbourhood Zone lying along the centre of the rear lane.

The local context along this section of Unley Road includes a mix of one to two-storey tall commercial buildings, including some with historic character. A collection of two-storey shops (circa 1880s) on the corner of Fashoda Street are Local Heritage Places. To the north of the site across Esmond Street is a single-storey commercial building associated with a car sales yard (Stillwell Ford). Further north along Unley Road, two large developments (seven-storey tall mixed-use residential buildings) have been recently completed between Hart and Opey Avenues.

To the west of the site, properties on Esmond Street are predominantly single-storey residential buildings with front setbacks and located within the Historic Area Overlay. The site has an existing Right of Way over the rear private lane, which provides vehicular access for the adjoining Unley Road commercial properties to the south and the residential properties presenting to Esmond and Fashoda Streets.

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Built Form and Building Height

The proposed building is five-storeys tall (18.5 metres to the level four canopy structure), which is consistent with the maximum height envisaged for the site.

The ground floor built form extends to the south and east boundaries. Minor setbacks are proposed along the north and west boundaries with narrow planting strips along the Esmond Street frontage and at the northwest corner. The levels above include gradual setbacks from the west (approximately seven metres on level two, 16 metres on level three and 21 metres for the majority of level four), with the intent to manage the development's impact on the smaller scale residential context to the west. The proposal is predominantly within the 30-degree building envelope required by its adjacency to the Established Neighbourhood Zone to the west, with a minor encroachment for the southern portion of level four. I support the consideration of the impact of the building scale, including provision of an overlooking analysis, that in my view demonstrates the impact on the adjacent zone is reasonably mitigated.

The lift and stair core is located on the southern boundary with the intent to maximise the northern aspect for the apartments. Levels one to four are proposed with tapered balconies with curved corners with the intent to distinguish the apartment floors from the single-storey tall building base. The top floor (level four) includes a low-pitch roof form with tapered edging to minimise the visual impact of the development's height. A large recess is proposed on each of the north and south elevations of the residential levels to provide natural light and ventilation access and built form modulation.

I support the proposed built form composition, including the building height, rear setbacks, building base and distinction between the base and the upper levels. In my view, the proposal reflects the envisaged development scale for the site and manages interface issues with the neighbouring small scale residential properties. I also acknowledge the consideration given to the building base's scale relationship within the Unley Road streetscape and the intent to define and optimise the legibility of the building base through built form contrast with the upper levels.

Architectural Expression and Materiality

The building base is characterised by sandstone wall sections and full height glazing suites to the Unley Road elevation and the street corner. On the Esmond Street frontage, grid screen mesh is proposed between stone wall sections to the transformer enclosure and the at-grade car parking area. Narrow landscaping areas are proposed in front of the car parking screening with the intent for climbing plants to contribute the visual screening. A continuous bronze coloured horizontal band is proposed to the north, east and west elevations aligned with cantilevering canopies over the footpaths. Levels one to three are characterised by balconies with curved corners and light coloured brick wall sections. The top floor and the recessed section of level three are contrasted through bronzed coloured wall cladding. The four-storey recessed element on the east (Unley Road) elevation is also proposed with bronze coloured aluminium cladding. The south elevation is largely solid due to its site boundary location and is proposed with fibre cement cladding.

I support the general approach for the use of a collection of limited materials and colours, including the use of masonry material for the building base. I also acknowledge and support the intent to reinforce the built form modulation with the use of contrasting bronze coloured cladding for the recessive elements. While I am concerned by the use of a lightweight material for the largely solid south boundary wall, I recognise the challenges of achieving a consistent finish with precast concrete. To that end, I recommend consideration be given to the finish of the fibre cement cladding, with the view to minimise ongoing maintenance requirements. I also

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recommend provision of additional articulation to the south wall given its likelihood to remain highly visible due to the scale of the existing surrounding buildings. The wall will also form a backdrop to the two-storey Local Heritage Places as viewed from the south.

In addition, I recommend confirmation of the screening arrangement for the transformer, with the view to ensure effective visual screening. I also recommend confirmation of the screening arrangement for the rooftop solar panels, noting potential visibility from long perspectives along Unley Road. It is noted that the any rooftop elements should be designed carefully to ensure the design intent for a finely expressed roof form can be achieved.

Ground Floor and Public Realm

The ground floor comprises the residential entry and a commercial tenancy on the Unley Road frontage. Behind the tenancy, a transformer enclosure is proposed to the Esmond Street frontage, and a service area is accessed from the residential entry corridor. Residential and visitor parking spaces are located behind a roller door, accessed from the rear laneway. Within the car parking area, a separately enclosed garage for two car parking spaces is proposed at the eastern end.

I support the intent for a commercial tenancy at ground level as an opportunity for streetscape activation, and the provision of canopies over the Unley Road footpath to provide shade, shelter and amenity. Acknowledging the relatively small number of apartments, I am concerned by the constrained residential entry arrangement, including the lack of a lobby space and the narrowness of the entry corridor. I recommend review of the ground floor configuration, with the view to improve the arrival sequence, with consideration of the following:

- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- universal access requirements
- provision of a generous residential lobby with visual connection to the street.

Internal Planning

The proposal comprises 10 apartments and a mix of apartment types and layouts, including one, two and three-bedroom apartments, and a three-bedroom penthouse on level four.

A central lift and stair core is proposed on the southern boundary, with centralised circulation space. A void/lightwell located to the east of the lift is open to the south and provides access to natural light to the lift lobby. Each apartment is proposed with private open spaces that are directly connected to living areas. I support the provision of natural light and outlook to the lift lobbies and natural light and ventilation to all habitable rooms.

In general, I support the generous apartment sizes and layouts and private open space allowances that offer a high level of amenity for residents. In my view, residential amenity can be further improved by provision of windows to the west elevation of levels three and four to improve access to natural light and ventilation. I also recommend confirmation regarding fire separation requirements between apartment types 2.1 and 2.2 on level two.

Landscape

Soft landscaping with a combination of plants is proposed to the northern perimeter and the northwest corner of the site, including trained climbing plants. Although limited in area, I support the inclusion of soft landscaping and recommend inclusion of an irrigation system to ensure ongoing success of these landscaping elements. In

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my view, effective visual screening of the at-grade car parking area is critical in improving the public realm presentation along the Esmond Street frontage.

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Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)

No specific sustainability initiatives have been identified beyond provision of roof mounted solar panels. The planning report indicates that the development is anticipated to achieve a 7-Star NatHERS rating, and I recognise the inclusion of passive design principles such as provision of natural light and ventilation to all habitable rooms and deep balconies to provide solar shading. Acknowledging the proposal is not seeking to achieve development scale beyond the maximum envisaged for the site, I am of the view that all new developments of the proposed scale should demonstrate ESD considerations. I recommend development of sustainability targets and consideration of integrated ESD initiatives.

Advice summary

To ensure the most successful design outcome is achieved the State Commission Assessment Panel 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
- provision of additional articulation to the south boundary wall
- confirmation of the screening treatment of the transformer
- confirmation of the screening arrangement for the rooftop solar panels
- review of the ground floor configuration with the view to improve the arrival sequence
- inclusion of an irrigation system to the soft landscaped areas
- development of sustainability targets and consideration of integrated ESD initiatives.

Yours sincerely



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