

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

## **Architect's Design Statement**

PROPOSED MIXED-USE BUILDING COMPRISING OF 58 SERVICED APARTMENTS, COMMERCIAL & RETAIL SPACE AT 21-25 WOODRIF STREET, PENRITH, NSW, 2750

### **Introduction:**

Located at 21-25 Woodriff Street, the site is currently used as a car park which has approximately 40 spaces. The proposal is to construct a seven storey, mixed-use building comprised of 58 Serviced Apartments, commercial office space, two retail tenancies and a rooftop pool with conference area. The site is unique due to the surrounding context and geometry, so it was important to recognise the many challenges and opportunities it presented.

### **Contextual Connectivity:**

Contextual analysis lies at the heart of any successful design. Undertaking an in depth study, accessing a variety of sources, we made it our mission to understand the context to the best of our ability. As mentioned above, the site is unique. To the North lies Memory Park and Memory Lane; a tribute and memorial to the soldiers of war. It is lined with retail tenancies along a covered walkway which runs from High St down towards Union Lane. The walkway is a key pedestrian path of travel. As we wanted the proposal to integrate successfully with the current contextual activities, we decided to pick this path of travel to define one side of "the funnel"; this also is the main entrance into both the retail tenancies and the lobby area. By making this gesture, the retail tenancy as part of the proposal seemingly acts as a continuation to the existing retail tenancies alongside memory park. Secondary to this, one of the key objectives of the Penrith DCP is Pedestrian Amenity. In figure 3.1 [DCP 2007], it highlights the key arterial pedestrian pathways and links in which they wish to maintain. Taking this into consideration, we created a pedestrian-friendly walkway through the site in order to allow a clear path of travel to Union Lane and in turn, the numerous arcades and thoroughfares which connect through to High Street. As the car parking previously acted as an obstacle for this pedestrian flow, we hope it will bring new life to said links.

The Funnel element turns the corner between the existing retail strip and also the newly reclaimed Woodriff Street road closure. The Funnel is the main entry; it is the continuation of and termination point of memory park.

To the West of the site is Judges Car park. It has three decks of parking and is open air on the upper level. This presented one of the major challenges with the design. As the predominant use of the building is serviced apartments, we wanted to minimise both the visual and sound impacts; especially on the lower levels of the building [levels 1-3]. The proposal has a new 'green' wall which runs along almost the entire Western Boundary, and terminates on the same line as the car park wall facing Union lane. The primary function is to minimise the noise from cars and people, however it will also create an inviting backdrop for the guests and public driving through the port- cochere. Additional to this, we have created a podium and Communal Open Space which will have a large amount of planting; protecting and separating the car park from those apartments located closer to it. By undertaking these measures, we believe it will significantly reduce the sound pollution and visual privacy from the car park.

The Site currently provides a roadway through to Judges Car park. The through road connection was an opportunity to provide a continuation of the rear lane around the building, linking Union Lane and Woodriff

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access handle. By doing this, the vehicular entry point and guest drop-off is off street and protected from the busy road. The laneway link is pedestrianised which provides opportunities for new linkages.

### **Building Form & Functionality**

The site presented many challenges due to its trapezoidal geometries. Referencing closely to both the Penrith DCP & LEP, the design was influenced by the key objectives outlined in each document. Active street frontages and desired setbacks drove our desire to create a street wall along Woodriff Street. This gesture also provided us with the opportunity to establish a new pedestrian pathway which runs alongside the ground level. The new location created three key positive outcomes; it would improve the safety and amenity of the pedestrians by reducing their proximity to travelling vehicles, provide protection from the weather and also activate the street frontages of the building.

In order to continue the language and function of memory park and the retail tenancies beside it, we located to retail tenancies on either side of the main entrance into the building. Also, the materials and landscaping within memory park will be continued into that specific portion of the site; creating a continuation of function, material and scale in order to integrate the sites with one another.

On the upper levels, the serviced apartments have been designed generously to provide a luxurious place to stay in Penrith. Taking into account the clientele may be larger sporting teams or conference groups, a majority of the apartments can be connected with one another; providing a great level of flexibility for the guests. Apartments and common circulation corridors are naturally lit and cross ventilated. Large window openings from the corridor spaces allow guests to take in the panoramic views which surround Penrith both to the North, South and West. The Roof Level provides something unique to both Penrith and Sydney abroad. It will boast a rooftop pool and gym for the guests and a large conference room. These two features further emphasise the luxurious nature of this project for potential guests; showcasing and symbolising the up-and-coming direction of Penrith City.

After numerous iterations, the Facade of the building is an integral part of the design. Firstly, we created a 'strong' base and podium which anchors the building to the ground. Above which sits a five levels of apartments which seamlessly float separate to the podium. They are broken up with a mix of vertical louvers, white balcony edges and horizontal windows which create a sense of movement and elegance. In order to reduce the bulk and scale of the upper levels, we have stepped back the building on the upper two levels both alongside Woodriff Street and Union Lane. Simplicity and subtlety throughout the facade, along with high level finishes and materials, combine to create a timeless and elegant building.

### **Ecologically Sustainable Development:**

It is known that buildings contribute to an overwhelming percentage of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. We recognised that is critical to be proactive and take a number of actions to minimise the impact from the building upon the environment. Construction requires a considerable amount of energy and materials. The proposal will be built with a concrete frame and non load bearing walls. This provides flexibility for the future if the function and/or design were to change to future demands. As mentioned previously, we intend to minimise the dependence on both air-conditioning and artificial lighting. Read switches will be installed in the apartments to ensure the air-conditioning will not be running at the same time a window is open. LED lighting and energy efficient products will also be installed throughout the apartments in order to reduce energy consumption.

The large roof feature will capture rainwater directly to a tank. This water can then be re-used either within the building itself or simply for the landscaping/cleaning requirements. The landscaping will be a major aspect of this scheme; aiming to successfully tie memory park to Judges Park with green pockets and tall tropical trees. As well as these measures it is also important to consider the positive implications for the local area. The proposal will provide local jobs, a place of social interaction and economic benefits.

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**Summary:**

Throughout the evolution of the project, the design and functionality of the building has changed considerably. We believe we have rigorously refined the details both internally and externally to create a well functioning and aesthetically pleasing result. We understand the significance and opportunity of the site, so it was our intention to create a landmark building and to set the bench mark for high quality development in Penrith. Due to this process, and the recent attainment of Design Excellence through council, we are confident that this project will contribute both socially and economically to the local Penrith Area.

If you have any queries with the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



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