

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 02 February 2023

4 - DA2022/2148 - 200 Condamine Street BALGOWLAH

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The application previously went through the PLM process earlier this year, with a similar scheme lodged with Council. The application was referred to DSAP. DSAP provided the following comment as part of PLM2022/0123:

“The Panel supports the overall proposal but notes that more consideration could and should be given to the adaptability of the building to other uses and potential for conversion to subtenancies.

The Panel strongly encourages the applicant to develop a sustainability strategy and for this to inform the approach to the façade and presentation to the street.

Minor height breaches that might result from additional floor to floor clearances to allow for adaptation or the future introduction of mezzanine and mid-level should not be a major concern in this location.

As noted above, car parking numbers proposed are lower than required and that this will be justified on the basis that the numbers are similar to other King Living outlets. Nevertheless, even if this lower amount is allowed, provision should be made for additional car parking provision in the future and how this is to be achieved should be indicated in a revised design.”

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

This site is located in an industrial area on an arterial road in Balgowlah. Neighbours are generally commercial/industrial/retail buildings while mixed use and residential uses are opposite.

In this diverse context, the design of the new King Building is a welcome addition, refreshing addition.

The Panel considers the design and proposed activity appropriate for the location.

Scale, built form and articulation

The Panel notes the recent changes to the interpretation of ‘existing ground’ level that results in a significant non-compliance with the LEP. Even without this change the proposal exceeds the height above the ‘extrapolated natural ground’ level in a number of places.

The Panel considers these breaches to be insignificant and having no adverse impacts on neighbouring properties or on the streetscape. Nevertheless, the Panel questions the need for such voluminous ceiling cavities.

Recommendations

1. Minor breaches of height are supportable on this site. Refer to comments relating to ‘skylights’ below.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

The Panel has been provided with the Pre-Lodgement Meeting notes of 11 August 2022 and notes and supports the comments of the traffic engineer.

The Panel notes that the fixed constraints imposed by flood conditions on the site.

The Panel suggested previously that it would be highly desirable for the adaptability of the building to other uses be shown. This has not occurred but is not, and cannot be in the Panel's view a basis for refusal.

Recommendations

2. Give regard to the comments and concerns of the Council Traffic Engineer in regard to the need to justify reduced car parking provision

Landscape

The Panel made the following comments at Pre-DA stage:

No detailed proposal for landscape were presented. The inclusion of the planter bed along the road frontage in the building setback is strongly supported.

The only landscape opportunity is in the setback zone. At this stage there is no detail of this area. The space should be used to enhance the streetscape and provide a native planting buffer to soften the building form with trees. This will require the removal of the basement under the landscape.

The Panel was informed that reducing ANY capacity in the flood storage would not be supported by Council and so the creation of a 'deep soil' zone at the road frontage would not be possible.

Nevertheless, the Panel remains of the view that the inclusion of trees and landscaping in this inhospitable environment is highly desirable, and if appropriately located, not in conflict with the legibility and visual prominence of the "King" signage. On the contrary, the maximisation of vegetation in the front setback, car park entry tunnel and at the rear.

The landscaped buffer zone at the front of the site is a positive contribution to the street and provides an appealing presentation of the new building. The low-level ground cover and shrubbery would be further enhanced with the addition of Palms or other small diameter trunk tree species (4 along the face) to create a more welcoming presentation of the building in the street without compromising the visibility into the showroom. Although street trees are not prevalent along Condamine Street, they are considered desirable, responsive to the original landscape and complimentary to the desired future character of what is otherwise a barren precinct. The new King showroom could therefore present as an oasis in an industrial desert environment.

The green walls are a welcome element of the proposal. It's noted however that the green wall at the southern end of the two-storey atrium may be better relocated along the southern external driveway wall where it is more visible to the street and provides a clear articulation of the end of the site. While vehicular driveways are often long dark tunnels, this driveway would present as an exemplary, welcoming and friendly entry to King customers and street passers-by in the street.

The appearance of the green wall at the rear of the site is another positive element however consideration should be given to providing shade from tree canopies or landscape trellises over the car park area. This would provide an increased amenity to King customers and illustrate thoughtful and sustainable design and distinguish King from other 'bulky goods' stores that have very little amenity.

Recommendations

The landscape proposed is minimal and does nothing to mitigate the bulk and scale of the proposed bulky building, provide amenity or reduce urban heat island effect. The adjacent hard urban environment is not a precedent that is supported.

The north facing rear paved carpark will be extremely hot in summer for visitors to the showroom and likewise the very low planting in the front setback will provide no mitigation.

The setback intent at the frontage is to add value to the public domain and the proponents own visualisation/montage indicates this is not successful in adding any real amenity. We recognise the



proponents desire to maximise visibility, but this need to be balanced with an outcome that adds to the public domain, mitigates urban heat.

Recommendations

3. Provide setbacks at the rear of the carpark to allow for large trees to shade the park cars and visitors. Properly designed these will not reduce basement parking spaces and deep soil in not necessary-just sufficient soil volumes.
4. Demonstrate soil volumes are designed so green vine walls will achieve the desired coverage and irrigation is provided
5. Add additional green wall to the driveway along the south side to improve the entry experience and mitigate the bulk and scale of the proposed bulky building
6. Put in large planting along the frontage to mitigate the bulk and scale of the proposed bulky building. Trees may be slender with high canopy's (E.g. Endemic Livistona palms) so as to minimise obstruction of the façade and signage. The intent is to enhance the visitor experience at the same time as providing a better-quality public domain.
7. Note the streetlight is in front of the front door – could the entry be more comfortably located?
8. Consideration should be given to trellises over the car park area
9. Consider a 'green wall' in the car park entry tunnel.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

The Panel supports the introduction of the sun shading to the western façade and considers this an improvement in terms of environmental performance, articulation of scale and internal amenity.

Sustainability

The Panel's previous advice was not to necessarily remove the skylight, but to improve the design to avoid excessive unwanted heat gains. The sustainability comments from the previous panel were not all addressed.

The Panel appreciates the inclusion of the 'Credwell Sustainable Building Strategies', however it would be highly desirable if these strategies were shown on the drawings and more precisely specified. The Panel appreciates that the building will comply with section J, but the applicant is strongly encouraged to investigate how even better performance might be achieved in a cost-effective manner. Utilisation of the extensive roof area for PV is an obvious example.

The 'Credwell' document does not align with some of the changes that have been made: for example, 'best practise (sic) daylighting strategies' does not align with the deletion of the skylight.

The 'Sustainable recreational water feature' is not evident on the plans.

Recommendations

10. Reinstate a skylight, with vertical glazing to control the solar gain. The Panel remarked that Renzo Piano's Menil Museum provides a good precedent for the quality of light and control that might be achieved and would likely be consistent and complementary with the 'King' aesthetic and works well volumetrically in relation to the escalators (compared to a flat, artificially lit ceiling).
11. Increase the amount of PV and provide estimates of the proportion of demand that will be met, aiming for carbon neutrality in operation
12. Include bike parking for visitors and staff with end of trip facilities for staff
13. Full electrification and no gas (if currently proposed) in anticipation of decarbonisation of the grid
14. Provide a rainwater tank volume and connect to toilet flushing and washdown as well as irrigation
15. Investigate material choices with low embodied carbon; low carbon concrete mixes should be investigated for the structure of the building, as well as other low carbon materials



16. Specify roofing materials with high albedo roof to reduce urban heat and install high insulation levels (currently noted as 'metal roof sheeting')
17. Carpark areas can be paved with light materials (white concrete) with lower heat island effect than dark concrete, pavers or black asphalt (Currently not specified)
18. Include windows on the eastern façade to allow cross ventilation.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel supports the proposal but recommends that the front landscaping and vegetation in the proposal be increased overall. The Panel considers the height breaches to be insignificant and would support any further breaches that might result from the reintroduction of a clerestory light or skylight if it can be shown that this would have minimal, if any impact.