



Global South

Urban Design Review: amended façade design (DRAFT)

Proposed 'Walk Up Village', 81-89 Rupert Street, Collingwood

Prepared by Simon McPherson, for Yarra City Council

11 August 2022

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 <i>Process and involvement</i>	3
1.2 <i>Qualifications and experience to prepare this Review</i>	4
1.2.1 Qualifications and registrations	4
1.2.2 Experience	4
2.0 Review of the amended proposal	6
2.1 <i>Are the amended facades and materials acceptable?</i>	6
2.1.1 Proposed changes	6
2.1.2 Assessment	6

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Process and involvement

I have been asked by Yarra City Council officers to review the proposed changes to façade design and materials in the previously approved development at 81-89 Rupert Street, Collingwood.

I previously provided a full Urban Design Review (referral) of the original Planning Application for the proposed development, in March 2020.

In preparing this report, I have received and reviewed:

- Façade Strategy report (6a Architects, June 2022);
- Town Planning Report – Incorporated Document Amendment (Urbis);

I have also considered the plans for the approved proposal, for comparison.

1.2 Qualifications and experience to prepare this Review

1.2.1 Qualifications and registrations

My academic qualifications are as follows:

- **Executive Masters (MSc) in Cities (Distinction)**, inaugural programme (September 2016 - completed February 2018), London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE Cities), UK;
- **Master of Science (MSc): Built Environment - Urban Design (Distinction)**, The Bartlett School, University College London, 2005-06, UK;
- **Bachelor of Architecture (BArch) (First Class Honours)**, The University of Melbourne, 1996-97;
- **Bachelor of Planning and Design (BPD) (Architecture)**, The University of Melbourne, 1992-94.

My professional registrations and memberships are as follows:

- **Registered Architect**, Architects Registration Board of Victoria: individual registration number 15838;

I am engaged on the following professional organisations:

- Member, **Melbourne Design Review Panel** (City of Melbourne, 2021-);
- Member, **Victorian Design Review Panel** (OVGA, since 2016);
- Member, **Casey Design Excellence Panel** (City of Casey, 2022-);
- Member, **South Australian Design Review Panel** (ODASA, since 2011);
- Member, **Latrobe University Design Review Panel** (currently inactive);
- Member, **Research Advisory Group, PlaceLab**, RMIT University (2022-);
- Global Advisor, United Nations Global Compact – Cities Programme (discontinued);
- Member, Built Environment Task Force, Smart Cities Council – Australia/New Zealand (discontinued).

1.2.2 Experience

Professional experience

I hold over 15 years of dedicated professional experience in urban design, including:

- Urban Designer, Victorian State Government (2002-2007, including study leave);
- Director, SJB Urban (2007-2016);
- Director, Global South (2016-present).

I hold approximately 5 years of prior experience in architectural practice, in Australia and the UK.

Project experience

My urban design experience includes the following projects:

- Policy and guidelines:
 - Author/contributor, *Better Placed*, NSW Architecture and Urban Design Policy, Government Architect NSW (2016-17). Benchmark design policy, winner Australia Award for Urban Design 2017;
 - Contributor (State Government employee), Design Guidelines for Higher Density Residential Development, Activity Centre Design Guidelines;
 - Contributor, SA Medium-Density Design Guidelines;

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- Lead consultant, Urban Design Guidelines, Bowden, SA (SJB Urban, 2015).
- Urban Design Advice:
 - Eden/Haven/Sanctuary on the River, Abbotsford, for HAMPTON (complete), (SJB Urban, 2010). High-density, mid-rise (9-11 storeys) permeable courtyard development, winner UDIA President's Award, High-Density Housing Award (National, Victoria), Masterplanned Development Award (Victoria);
 - Richmond Plaza redevelopment, for Coles (SJB Urban, 2014);
 - Grocon FCAD redevelopment, Footscray Station Precinct (SJB Urban, 2011).
- Independent reviews:
 - Regular independent reviews of permit applications, for Councils including Melbourne, Yarra, Port Phillip, Banyule, Brimbank, Manningham and Casey.
- Strategic plans, structure plans and Urban Design Frameworks:
 - Sunshine NEIC Urban Design Analysis and Framework Plans, for Brimbank City Council, in collaboration with Kinetica;
 - Footscray Built Form Review 2020, for Maribyrnong City Council;
 - Tarneit Major Town Centre: Economic Impact Assessment and Design Review 2018, for Wyndham City Council;
 - Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Precinct: Design Review 2018, for Monash City Council;
 - 1160 Sayers Road, Tarneit, Structure Plan for Wyndham City Council (landowner) (SJB Urban 2014-15). Innovative, integrated plan for high-density, walkable precinct in greenfield setting;
 - Footscray Station Precinct Planning and Urban Design Framework (SJB Urban, 2008-09). Winner, PIA Transport Planning Award 2008;
 - Brighton Toyota Site UDF, for LEFTA Corporation;
 - Frankston Transit Interchange Precinct UDF and Master Plan, for DPCD (SJB Urban 2009-2012);
 - Wise Foundation 'Wellness Village' UDF, Mulgrave, for landowners (SJB Urban, 2015-16).
- Master Plans and Concept Designs
 - Sunshine Station Master Plan 2021, for Department of Transport, in collaboration with Development Victoria;
 - Revitalising Central Dandenong (Sites 11-15) Master Plan/Development Plan, for Capital Alliance and Development Victoria, 2021;
 - Caulfield Village Master Plan, for Beck Property / Probuild (SJB Urban, 2012);
 - Greensborough Activity Centre Concept Master Plan, for Banyule City Council (2017);
 - 433 Smith Street (Fitzroy Gasworks) Master Plan, for Places Victoria (SJB Urban, 2015);
 - Master Plan, Binks Ford Site and over-rail deck, Footscray, for Places Victoria (SJB Urban, 2012);
 - Caulfield-Dandenong corridor concept/feasibility studies, for VicTrack (SJB Urban, 2015).

Experience preparing expert evidence

I have presented evidence at VCAT and Planning Panels Victoria on numerous occasions.

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2.0 Review of the amended proposal

2.1 Are the amended facades and materials acceptable?

2.1.1 Proposed changes

Warehouse podium

- Previous proposal:
 - Green pigmented precast concrete (PC_02);
- Current proposal:
 - Green ‘Colorbond’ corrugated metal (above ground floor);
 - Green pigmented precast concrete (ground floor).

This 4-storey component fronting Rupert Street is proposed to be clad in green corrugated metal, in place of the previously proposed concrete.

The corrugations are vertically oriented, with sheets angled slightly and overlapped to create expressed horizontal shadow lines. Green aluminium window frames are set within these lines.

South Building (tower)

- Previous proposal:
 - Precast concrete fins and beams in closely-spaced grid (similar to North Building), with glass behind (south and east) and concrete behind (west);
- Current proposal:
 - South and east: Clear glass with deep protruding vertical framing elements, and shallower protruding horizontal elements. Openable windows alternating between eye level and ceiling level at each floor level;
 - West: Precast concrete panels.

Podium boundary walls (west)

- Previous proposal:
 - Precast concrete with varied interlocking column/beam articulation;
- Current proposal:
 - Precast concrete panels (rectangular with ‘standard’ joints).

2.1.2 Assessment

Warehouse podium

The use of corrugated metal makes reference to the local context of industrial buildings, and so is acceptable from a content response perspective.

However, the use of a metal cladding material on a building base or podium is quite unusual risks making it appear ‘lightweight’ and less robust than a masonry wall material, in relation to the substantial tower above.

The proposed detailing of the metal cladding is considered, and will allow the façade to appear ‘panelised’ and provide a sense of depth (and therefore mass though the overlapping of sheet panels).

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The amendment to the South Building façade to glazing rather than the previous concrete lattice makes it visually lighter, which helps to balance its relationship to the lighter-weight cladding to the podium base.

The retention of green tinted concrete to Ground Floor level is appropriate, in providing a solid 'base' and grounding to the building, and protecting against damage to the corrugated metal (dents etc.).

On balance, I consider this design change to be acceptable, because it reflects a contextually responsive material and retains an appropriate sense of visual solidity through its detailing and articulation.

South Building (tower)

South and east

This design change reverts to a more conventional curtain wall system, although with openable windows and varied framing depths. This makes the building appear more conventional as an office development when viewed from the south (see render, Façade Strategy report, page 4), and less substantial, and will have less mass and texture.

However, the closely-spaced horizontal frames, deep vertical frames and openable window panels (with alternating high and low positioning) will create a sense of depth and variation in the facades.

I consider this façade to be acceptable.

It is more visually open and visually lighter than the previous proposal. However, it is less distinctive and less interesting as a façade approach.

There may be opportunity to integrate elements for visual interest in the facades, such as through colour highlights or similar, but this is not necessary to the acceptability of the façade as proposed.

West

The use of 'conventional' concrete panels to the west façade reflects a reduction in the visual interest, detailing and depth of this (blank) façade close to the boundary with adjoining properties to the west (but set back approximately 0.75m).

I recognise that adjoining sites on Rokeby Street may also be redeveloped to effectively 'cover' the boundary façade, but I am not aware of any proposals or approvals.

While I recognise that beams and fins may not be achievable economically on a black façade, I consider that additional articulation is warranted, to increase visual interest to this prominent form, and allow it to 'read' as more integrated with the other facades.

Recommendation:

Increase the articulation of the South Building's west-facing concrete, such as through further expressed joints or recesses, to align with and 'reflect' the South Building's glazed facades.

Podium boundary walls (west)

It is not clearly stated in the documentation, but I read these lower-height boundary walls to be conventional precast concrete panels, matching the South Building's west façade.

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I am not certain of the extent of visibility of these walls from Rokeby Street and other streets to the west, but the previous articulation was clearly more interesting and considered.

Therefore I consider that increased articulation is warranted, unless it can be demonstrated that these walls will not be visible from the public realm.

Recommendation:

Increase the articulation of the boundary walls to integrate with the other facades and overall composition, similar to the recommendation above for the South Building's west façade.