



THE PANEL'S ADVICE

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Block 1 Section 49 Kingston – Third Session
Kingston Arts Precinct



Australian Government
National Capital Authority



ACT
Government

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

THE PANEL'S ADVICE

Date issued: Wednesday 29 July 2020

Project: Kingston Arts Precinct

Review date: Wednesday 15 July 2020

Meeting location: Session held remotely via Microsoft Teams

Site visit: Wednesday 16 October 2019

Panel members: Catherine Townsend, Chair Andrew Smith, Co-Chair

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Proponent: Geocon

Observers: artsACT Suburban Land Agency (SLA)

(representatives from)

Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)

National Capital Authority (NCA)

Conflicts of interest: None

Confidentiality of the Panel's Advice: Design review considers concept proposals at various stages throughout the design process that are frequently subject to change and improvement in relation to feedback from the NCDRP. Throughout this time a commercial in confidence status is maintained for proposals that engage with the NCDRP.

In accordance with Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act (2007) (the Act), prescribed development proposals are required to provide a copy of the 'Panels Advice' and the proponent's 'Response to the Panels Advice' in writing when the Development Application when is submitted. Section 30 of the Act identifies the design advice and the proponent's written response to that advice as associated documents, therefore the most recent Panel's Advice and the proponent's response become publicly available once a Development Application is publicly notified for community comment.

MEETING SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Property address: 11 Wentworth Avenue Kingston (Block 1 Section 49 Kingston)

Proposal:

In late 2015, Section 49 Kingston was released by the ACT Government through a Request for Tender (RFT) process seeking a design response that would consider development opportunities within the land, celebrate the presence of heritage within the site and include a visual arts precinct which facilitates the individuality of selected arts organisations.

The proposed master plan and design concepts is the response to the 2015 RFT process which required respondents to prepare a development proposal for the design and delivery of a mixed-use precinct incorporating a range of public assets, including new visual arts buildings, car parking (with approximately 500 publicly available spaces) and an outdoor events space.

The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) has negotiated an agreement with Geocon (the proponent) that includes project delivery conditions, approval processes and a four year timeframe for handover of arts facilities and other public assets.

The Kingston Arts Precinct (KAP) master plan and design concepts propose a public domain designed to celebrate the site's history and context, honouring the presence of the heritage buildings. A new central square is proposed (known as the 'public canvas') to provide a green space adjacent to the fitters' workshop and the old bus depot, to accommodate events, festivals and outdoor markets. Activated streetscapes, laneways and pocket parks are proposed as the 'glue' that binds the heritage buildings and the new buildings at the edges of the site. The proposed building heights are between two to six storeys.

This proposal was initially presented to design review on Wednesday 16 October 2019. The proposal returned for a second session on Wednesday 17 June 2020. The third session was held on Wednesday 15 July 2020, at which the proponent team responded to the Panel's Advice issued after the second session.

Proponents' representative address to the panel:

The proponent team represented by Fender Katsalidis Architects and Oculus commenced the presentation by noting the heritage buildings presence and ongoing influence on the design of the precinct. The proponent team then discussed the development of the proposal in response to the Panel's Advice from the last session as follows.

Pedestrian and vehicular movements were highlighted by the proponent as a key consideration. The proponent particularly noted that further development of the infrastructure that is associated with circulation has been undertaken to enable legibility of the overlaid future traffic conditions. Through design development, street widths have typically increased, and the proposal now staggers building setbacks from the street edges rather than following the orthogonal geometry as seen in the

previous iterations. The strategy of a discontinuous street condition throughout the proposal was explained, where continuous visual connections are not provided down the length of the street, intending to slow vehicles speeds and provide greater priority to pedestrians.

Vehicular circulation was proposed to provide one-way 'shareways' running south to north along Arts Land and Printers Way extension and from north to south in front of the Glassworks forecourt with no waste truck access. Two-way streets are proposed along Chapel Lane and Canvas Street with waste truck access. Also proposed are two-way streets without waste truck access, one located off Wentworth Avenue and the other off Eastlake Parade. The proponent noted during the presentation that the proposed vehicular circulation strategy now enables more efficient distribution of traffic throughout the precinct and has also reduced the number of vehicle cross-over points along Eastlake Parade.

Also presented was waste collection, car parking entries and drop-off point locations throughout the precinct. Waste collection points were noted to be located on the two-way streets to accommodate ACT waste truck clearance requirements instead of allowing trucks down one-way streets to avoid the creation of large vacant areas at intersections that were noted as inconsistent with the desired outcomes for the public domain within this precinct. Vertical circulation points and activate ground plane uses were also presented.

Two options were discussed regarding the basement car parking for private car parking. The proponent team advised that the required provision for private car parking is 1,164 spaces. The first option contained all private car parking underneath the areas of land that are to be retained by the developer, however these areas would require larger basement areas as the irregular shapes do not optimise car parking layouts. The second option was predicated on the allowance of overlapping titles and included a rectangular area underneath the 'public canvas' (that is to be territory land), identified as a suitable area for efficient car parking layouts.

Activation of the ground plane was discussed as the proponent explained the Soho approach for the proposal, being the inclusion of residential units interfacing the streets. The incorporation of public art was also described as an activation technique that will further support the series of 'moments' discussed in the last session. Furthermore, the distribution of public art throughout the precinct was described to encourage and curate the movement and enjoyment of the journey throughout and enhance the variety of those 'enjoyments' through the built form, light and shade, tighter spaces and more open spaces.

Development of the landscape response was presented. The proponent noted the variety of landscape characters proposed throughout the precinct and explained that formal gestures such as double road trees have been avoided, instead the proposal includes more nuanced outcomes. The influence of landscape characters that interface the precinct were also noted by the proponent to now permeate the edges. A greater tree canopy coverage was proposed for the public canvas and a waterplay piece associated with the canvas' lawn was noted.

Development of the Glassworks Forecourt was discussed by the proponent, with changes including a widened gap between the two Arts Hub buildings

to increase the forecourt area, further development of the landscape character and a new small pavilion structure that also frames permeable views to the existing Stacks. The space was explained to now enact the 'space in waiting' character with the proponent noting that the 'emptiness' has value as a symbolic entry that acts as a void. The area was also noted to be suitable for events and proposes a vehicle drop-off point directly in front of the forecourt.

The main Arts Hub building was discussed, and the proponent noted that the continuity of the long-shed form as presented in the previous iteration may have been a little overwhelming. The proponent noted that the form has been broken-up to open key views towards the north and north-east, and the staggering of modulated masses begins to relieve the building of this dominant presence. The proponent also noted that the underpasses created by the Arts Hub building provides opportunities for urban art installations.

The proponent closed the presentation by discussing a suite of perspective drawings showing Chapel Square, Chapel Lane and Printers way that lent to the developing character of each space. The proponent noted that they are beginning to consider materiality and are beginning to analyse the ground plane activation outcomes (i.e. 'are office buildings backdrops or visual participants?'). The proponent also noted that Lovell Chen are engaged as the heritage advisors and that their input will be increased moving forward with the project.

Recommendation: Based on the documentation provided prior to the design review session; a site visit by the panel on Wednesday 16 October 2019; and the proponents presentation at the design review session, the following comments and recommendations are provided:

The Panel highly commends the proponent team for the development of the proposal since the last design review session on Wednesday 17 June 2020 and thanks the proponent for their comprehensive response to the last Panel's Advice.

The work completed so far regarding the precinct's circulation strategies is commended by the Panel. The Panel however remains concerned that traffic studies of the existing road networks have not yet been presented and requests that the provides analysis of their findings accompanied by a robust justification for how the study has informed the resultant vehicular circulation strategy for the precinct. Furthermore, the Panel requests that the proponent discusses impacts and management strategies for the existing road network under predicted event capacity for the precinct (i.e. market day, concerts) and how the proposed vehicular circulation strategy within the precinct will also accommodate these traffic volumes.

The Panel also suggests that the integration of pedestrian networks requires further consideration and requests that the proponent identifies suitable connections to signalised crossing points across Wentworth Avenue and Eastlake Parade (to Bowen Park, the Waterfront and Trevillian Quay). Furthermore, the Panel suggests that these roads that interface the precinct should be considered as inclusive of the precinct and requests to see the public domain outcomes for these areas at the next design review session.

The Panel is encouraged by the development of the Wentworth Avenue address and is pleased to see the increased generosity provided to the Glassworks Forecourt. The Panel however acknowledges that further design development is required to address concerns regarding massing; views in to the site (in particular to the stack); the staggering of building setbacks along this edge; and the ratios of open space around buildings that potentially skews the hierarchy of built form from this aspect. The Panel is also excited by the new pavilion structure proposed next to the Arts Hub building at the Glassworks Forecourt and looks forward to seeing how this ensemble could be developed as a signature building for the precinct.

The Panel notes that the existing Bus Depot Markets currently spill out on to both the north and eastern sides. The Panel is concerned that the proposed configuration of the Arts Hub building in the Glassworks Forecourt interrupts the spill out opportunities and requests the proponent further considers this arrangement to instead enable connections between the two areas.

The opening of sky views to the north and north-east is appreciated by the Panel. The Panel now requests that the proponent provides perspective studies that clarify how these openings would harness views from the external context into the precinct.

The Panel notes that sustainability principals have not yet been discussed and looks forward to seeing development of these objectives at the next design review session.

Furthermore, the Panel requests that the proponent engages with the ACT Heritage Council to discuss the proposal and obtain advice regarding issues such as building footprint, height, massing and view corridors before the next design review session.

The Panel also requests that in the subsequent set of presentation materials that the proponent includes a site plan where north is shown up the page.

Key Issues and Recommendations

The *Key Issues and Recommendations* provide detail advice to the proponent, consistent with the above recommendation.

To achieve the best possible design outcome for the proposal, the proponent is encouraged to consider the following issues through the next stages of the design development:

1.0 Context and character

1.1 The Panel is concerned that the proponent has not yet engaged in consultation with the ACT Heritage Council for the current proposal. The Panel is therefore reluctant to offer further commentary regarding the heritage response and requires that the proponent seeks advice from the ACT Heritage Council regarding their views on the important heritage elements that this precinct is predicated upon. The Panel asks the proponent to identify the key heritage views and address any potential ACT Heritage Council concerns provided in the sought-out advice before the next design review session and presents these findings in the next presentation.

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- 1.2 The Panel welcomes the generosity now proposed for the Wentworth Avenue forecourt and is encouraged by the developing character of this space. The Panel does however acknowledge that further design resolution is required and recommends the proponent further considers the following:
- 1.2.1 The Panel is concerned that the view to the 'stack' from the Wentworth Avenue aspect continues to be obscured by the Arts Hub building. The Panel suggests the placement and/or form of the Arts Hub building could be further developed to enhance opportunities for views to this important heritage item (i.e. the Arts Hub building could splay to open the view shed). As such the Panel looks forward to seeing how the arrangement of built form in the forecourt can optimise views to the stack, particularly from vehicular and pedestrian aspects travelling along Wentworth Avenue.
 - 1.2.2 The Panel commends the proponent for embracing the 'place in waiting' character and appreciates the proponent's noted value of the 'void'. The Panel does however suggest the importance of applying highly activated uses to the forecourt's edges and sees opportunity to include an anchoring use (i.e. boutique theatre/cinema) to ensure this area can achieve the desired urban outcome.
 - 1.2.3 The Panel is strongly encouraged by the proposed pavilion structure (Pavilion) and sees an opportunity for it to be expressive of the precinct's historic values (e.g. glassmaking). The Panel does however question the siting of the Pavilion and its relationship with the proposed Arts Hub building. The Panel discussed whether the Pavilion should sit proud of surrounding built form, towards Wentworth Avenue to gesture an entrance or 'hook' for the precinct. The Panel also questioned whether it should be designed in conjunction with the Arts Hub building as an element that supports its functions. As such the Panel looks forward to seeing further design development of the Pavilion, its relationship with the Arts Hub building and how it can reinforce legibility and celebrate historic values of the arts precinct.
 - 1.2.4 The Panel is concerned that the ratios of open space areas either side of the Arts Hub building (created by the Glassworks Forecourt and two-way access street adjacent to the Bus Depot Markets) potentially skew the hierarchy of built form from the Wentworth Avenue aspect as the Powerhouse no longer appears the dominant element because the Arts Hub building is seemingly isolated. As such, the Panel looks forward to seeing further consideration to the characteristics (i.e. spatial, landscape) of the open space areas either side of the Arts Hub building from the Wentworth Avenue aspect to ensure a clear hierarchy is demonstrated (also see Item 6.2).
 - 1.2.5 Acknowledging the prominence that the Arts Hub building and Pavilion ensemble proposed, as well as its importance to perform as a defining urban gesture from the Wentworth
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Avenue aspect, the Panel suggests that this ensemble could be of differentiated character from other buildings within its vicinity and suggests that this would be a suitable location for a signature building for the precinct.

- 1.3 The Panel acknowledges that the verge between the existing Bus Depot Markets and Wentworth Avenue is not within the scope of this proposal. However, the Panel is concerned that the extent of hard surfacing in this area gives the building more prominence than intended. As such the Panel suggests the proponent provides further consideration to the treatment of landscaping/hardscaping and develops how the edge of this proposal interfaces with the Bus Depot Markets building to ensure an appropriate hierarchy of buildings is maintained along the Wentworth Avenue aspect.

2.0 Landscape

- 2.1 The Panel appreciates the influence of external landscape characters is being considered for this proposal. However, the Panel is unclear what the outcomes along Eastlake Parade and Wentworth Avenue will look like and how the proponent could achieve seamless integration with the existing context. As such, the Panel requests the proponent considers the precinct to be inclusive of these streets demonstrates the landscape outcomes to the same effect as the streets that are internal.

3.0 Sustainability

- 3.1 The Panel notes that sustainable design measures have not yet been discussed for the precinct. The Panel encourages the proponent to explore opportunities for the inclusion of 'collected energy' technologies (e.g. solar, geothermal). The Panel also questions how water sensitive urban design principles will be integrated into this proposal. As such, the Panel looks forward to seeing the development of sustainability objectives at the next design review session.

4.0 Density and connectivity

- 4.1 The Panel appreciates the work completed so far to integrate this proposal's street geometry with that of its existing context. The Panel is however concerned that pedestrian networks have not yet been fully resolved and suggests that signalised pedestrian crossing points could be provided. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the proponent identifies these locations particularly to connect with Bowen Park, across Wentworth Avenue and across Eastlake Parade (in addition to the Eastlake Square connection) and develops the connections to the signalised points to ensure a fluid pedestrian and active travel experience can be achieved.
- 4.2 The Panel is not yet convinced that adequate traffic studies have been undertaken to support the proposed vehicular access strategy. The Panel notes that traffic analysis of the existing road networks is a critical piece of work and requests the proponent presents the findings of this at the next design review session in association with proposed vehicular access strategy.

5.0 Built form and scale

- 5.1 The Panel is uncertain whether the staggering of building setbacks along Arts Lane introduces dynamic spatial outcomes or erodes the original concept. The Panel does however note that this gesture could be duplicated for the Wentworth Avenue edge as this would offer relief to the continuous edge of built form that is currently proposed along this aspect. As such, the Panel looks forward to seeing how the proponent could incorporate the staggering into the overall design strategy.
- 5.2 Further to the above (5.1), it is acknowledged the proposal is at an interstitial design phase, thus the Panel suggests that the proponent revisits the underlying design principals to clarify the overall strategy and provides justification regarding anomaly between the current proposal and the original design intent at future presentations to the Panel.
- 5.3 The Panel is strongly encouraged by the opening of views to/from the north and north-east through the break-up of the Arts Hub building form at the upper levels. The Panel is interested to understand the views that are being framed through the break-up of built form throughout the site. As such the Panel request the proponent prepares perspective studies that demonstrates the key views or 'glimpses in' to the precinct from various points from the external context, particularly views to heritage items (see next item).
- 5.4 The Panel also continues to suggest that the proponent further develops the framing of views for key heritage items, both from the external context and internally within the precinct. The Panel therefore suggests that the proponent consults with the ACT Heritage Council to decipher how particular heritage items should be treated (e.g. maintaining views to the ridgelines of the Powerhouse, the placement of the locomotive) and requests the proponent prepares perspective studies to support these recommendations.

6.0 Functionality and build quality

- 6.1 The Panel appreciates the further development of the vehicular access strategy, however notes that the strategy presented only demonstrates typical demands of the streets within this precinct. Noting the various events that the precinct will hold, the Panel requests that the proponent develops strategies for how the network will operate at during events such as market day, performances, exhibitions, etc. and which streets could be closed and how traffic would be redirected.
- 6.2 The Panel notes that the existing Bus Depot Markets currently spill out to both the north and the east. The Panel is concerned that the Arts Hub building located within the Glassworks Forecourt potentially interrupts the spill out to the north and does not allow for connection to the Glassworks Forecourt beyond. As such, the Panel recommends that the proponent further considers design options that could enables the Bus Depot Markets to spill out in both directions.

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- 6.3 The Panel highly commends the proponent for the proposed landscape response so far. The Panel however remains concerned that the aspirations may not be consistent with the requirements for plant species for government owned assets, particularly regarding the public canvas. As such, the Panel recommends that the proponent consults with government and develops the intended management regime to ensure the aspirations are achievable and will be well-managed into the future.
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