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INDEPENDENT EXPERT EVIDENCE ADVICE

WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT C194

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Prepared by

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BACKGROUND

1. I have been instructed by HWL Ebsworth, acting on behalf of the City of Whitehorse, the landowner of 517 and 519-527 Station Street to provide expert urban design evidence in relation to the Planning Scheme Amendment C194, specifically in reference to the proposed development at 517 and 519-527 Station Street.
2. Tasks that I was engaged to undertake included:
 - a) A review of the plans and related planning and urban design documents forming part of the application;
 - b) A review of Council planning and urban design reports (including the Box Hill Structure Plan and General Principles and Design Guidelines prepared by the Hansen Partnership (March 2016));
 - c) A review of submissions related to urban design issues for the proposal and submissions generally;
 - d) The preparation of drawings to allow a review of the western boundary interfaces;
 - e) The preparation of an urban design report; and
 - f) The provision of expert witness evidence at the hearing.
3. I was requested to address the following matters in my expert statement, from an urban design perspective:
 - a) the appropriateness of the development, in a holistic sense, having regard to its height, siting, architectural expression;
 - b) the appropriateness of the development's provision of internal public space and interface with the public realm;
 - c) specific urban design evidence related to the interface issues to the west and south of the site, reflecting the wording in the letter from the Minister for Planning authorising the preparation of the amendment; and
 - d) any other matter that I see appropriate
4. My expert urban design evidence statement has been prepared in accordance with the Panel Hearing Guide to Expert Evidence.
5. I was provided with a series of documents by HWL Ebsworth which forms the basis of my report. The documents included the following:
 - > Explanatory Report
 - > Draft Planning Permit 2016-269
 - > Instruction sheet
 - > Notice of preparation for combined amendment and permit exhibition
 - > Zone Map
 - > Schedule to Clause 52.03 (track changed)
 - > Schedule to Clause 81.01 (track changed)
 - > Incorporated document 517 and 519-521 Station Street dated December 2016
 - > Section 96A Application Planning Report prepared by Urbis dated 21 December 2016
 - > Accompanying plans (exhibition)
 - > Acoustic Assessment
 - > Environmental and Wind Tunnelling
 - > Green Travel Plan
 - > Transport Impact Assessment
 - > Waste Management Plan
 - > Urban Design Report Parts 1 & 2
 - > Urban Design Report Part 3 Parts 1 & 2
 - > Landscape Planning Report
 - > Landscape plans
 - > Council Minutes 16 May 2016 discussing sale of car park 20 February 2017 & 17 July 2017
 - > ESD Management Plan
 - > Submissions to exhibited material
6. I visited the site early September 2017 to assist with the urban design review and accuracy of the expert evidence.

7. My office prepared a series of Sectional Sketches through the western boundary of the site to review and provide further commentary on the western and southern boundaries.
8. I also utilised the development plan TP122, as submitted, to mark up the new section locations and review the percentage area of encroachment into Precinct D of Building B, and the percentage area of development above 4 storeys.
9. Sketches referenced in my expert evidence statement were prepared by Aaron Lo, Graduate Architect of MGS Architects.
10. I provided review and commentary on the sketches noted above, and am confident in their accuracy.

STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

11. A number of directions and relevant clauses within Plan Melbourne and the State Planning Policy Framework were considered when reviewing this proposal from an urban design perspective.
12. Plan Melbourne outlines a vision for Melbourne: Melbourne will be a global city of opportunity and choice achieved by 5 key directions - relevant to this application: 1) Developing in defined areas near services and infrastructure; 2) Population estimates indicate Melbourne could grow to a city of around 7.7 million people and require an additional 1.6 million more dwellings.
13. Direction 2.2 seeks to reduce the cost of living by increasing housing supply near services and public transport.
14. Clause 11 of the State Planning Policy Framework encourages more intensive development in Activity Centres.
15. Clause 11.01-2 'Activity Centre Planning' encourages the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres which provide a variety of land uses and are highly accessible to the community. Strategies to achieve this include:
 - > Undertake strategic planning for the use and development of land in and around the activity centres.
 - > Encourage a diversity of housing types at higher densities in and around activity centres.
 - > Reduce the number of private motorised trips by concentrating activities that generate high numbers of (non-freight) trips in highly accessible activity centres.
 - > Improve access by walking, cycling and public transport to services and facilities for local and regional populations.
 - > Broaden the mix of uses in activity centres to include a range of services over longer hours appropriate to the type of centre and needs of the population served.
 - > Provide a focus for business, shopping, working, leisure and community facilities.
 - > Encourage economic activity and business synergies.
 - > Improve the social, economic and environmental performance and amenity of the centre.
16. Clause 11.04-2 Housing Choice and Affordability seeks to reduce the cost of living by increasing housing supply near services and public transport.
17. Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage – notably clause 15.01 Urban Design – promotes good design and encourages development to achieve architectural and urban design outcomes that contribute positively to local urban character and enhance the public realm while minimising detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.
18. Clause 16 Housing - encourages higher density housing development in and around activity centres and employment corridors and at other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport.
19. Clause 18.02-1 promotes cycling and aims to integrate planning for bicycle travel with land use and development planning and to encourage cycling as an alternative mode of travel.
20. Clause 19.01 promotes renewable energy use in development.
21. Clause 19-03-05 seeks to minimise waste and encourages recycling.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

22. A number of provisions within the Whitehorse Planning Scheme and the Box Hill Activity Centre Transit City Structure Plan were considered as relevant to the permit application, including:
23. Clause 21.04 - Strategic directions - The site is within a Principal Activity Centre.

24. Clause 21.06 - Housing - The site is within an area where substantial densities of housing could be envisaged.
25. Clause 22.03 – Residential - The site is in an area where substantial change is envisaged with residential typologies developed appropriately to reflect these denser contexts of town centre location.
26. Clause 22.06 - Activity Centres - Box Hill is a designated Central Activities District.
27. Clause 22.07 - Box Hill Central Activity Precinct Plan - The site sits within Precinct F, Southern and Eastern Precincts.
28. Clause 22.07 - Box Hill Central Built Form Precinct - The western section of the site sits within Precinct D while the remainder of the site sits within Precinct F.
29. Precinct D is designated as a Mid-rise Commercial and Mixed Use Precinct: 4-storey preferred height supporting increased density, with no (or minimal) front and side setbacks to create active frontages onto streets.
30. Precinct F is designated as a Major Development Precinct: Taller buildings permitted, enabling increased density. Heights must not cause overshadowing of Key Open Spaces, Residential Precincts A or B or residential areas beyond the study area. Transitional heights to be provided at edges of the precinct to respect the scale of neighbouring precincts.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

31. A number of provisions within the General Principles and Design Guidelines prepared by Hansen Partnership for the City of Whitehorse were also considered in relation to the permit application, including:
 32. Vision – A true mixed use development, demarcating itself as a destination within Box Hill Activity Centre which offers a unique urban experience and as a node for leisure, working and living.
 33. General Principles - selections below as relevant:
 - a) Develop a series of development parts.
 - b) Establish vertical and horizontal mixed use.
 - c) Encourage strong street frontages.
 - d) Establish a transition in building scale.
 - e) Establish a diversity of urban space typology.
 34. Design Guidelines - various commentary points not listed but referenced in my discussions later in the statement.
 35. Building Configuration – various commentary points not listed but referenced in my discussions later in the statement.
 36. Framework Concept Plan – This plan illustrates three number development ‘cells’ on the site, decreasing in dimension towards the west. Development heights are nominated as ‘tallest’ to the north east, and ‘lowest’ to the south west. Each parcel is divided by a lane network, the eastern lane between the larger development ‘cells’ nominated as 10m in width, and connected to the wider precinct pedestrian network. The second lane is noted in the concept plan as a service/vehicle access lane. An improved public open space is nominated to the south east corner of the site (southern boundary).
37. While the Framework Concept Plan does not state ‘tallest’ or ‘lowest’ heights, the Building Configuration section of the Guidelines notes that the building scale should be between 6-15 storeys, with an opportunity of a bonus up to 18 storeys (conditional upon matters listed within the Hansen Partnership document).
38. It is noted that the 6-18 storeys stated in the General Principles and Design Guidelines exceeds the heights for the portion of the site identified in the Structure Plan and the Planning Scheme as Precinct D, being a 4-storey preferred height supporting increased density.
39. The Precinct D portion of the site is less than 20% of the applications development site footprint and to the immediate west. It is reasonable to expect that this portion of the site should perform a transitional role in a built form sense, therefore the 6 storey heights as proposed in the General Principles and Design Guidelines is not ill considered in my opinion when referenced against the wider precincts shown in the Structure Plan.
40. The heights of 6-18 storeys stated in the General Principles and Design Guidelines are consistent with the intent of Precinct F, taller buildings permitted, enabling increased density, no height limit.

URBAN DESIGN REVIEW

SITE CONTEXT

41. The site of the proposal being assessed is located at the corners of Station Street and Cambridge Street, Box Hill, VIC 3128.
42. The site is a combination of two addresses, 519-521 Station Street and 517 Station Street.
43. While both sites are generally rectangular in shape, the development proposal combines the 517 Station Street site and the 519-521 Station Street site meaning that the development parcel is effectively an 'L' shape.
44. A small step occurs approximately 35m east of the western boundary, approximately 2m deep. This step nominally demarcates Built Form Precincts D and F.
45. The combined sites have a consistent gradient down from the north-west corner towards the south-east corner. The change in level totals a maximum of approximately 5.8m between the opposing corner, with a gradient drop of 3m on the eastern boundary of the site over 70m, and a 2m drop on the eastern boundary over approximately 49m.
46. The 519-521 Station Street site is currently being used as a paid public car park, operated by the City of Whitehorse Council.
47. There are six vehicle crossovers entering the site, three in number off Station Street and three in number off Cambridge Street.
48. The 519-521 Station Street site has a series of streetscape trees to the northern edge of the site, and three larger trees within the site.
49. The 517 Station Street site is currently built upon and is being operated as a Childcare facility by Council. The existing building is of medium to low architectural merit.
50. There are no vehicle crossovers onto 517 Station Street from Station Street.
51. A series of trees are located to the external areas of the site to the southern and western boundaries.
52. The site is bordered by existing built form to the south and west of the site. This built form transitions to the existing residential hinterland to the south.
53. The existing built form to the site boundaries is varied in scale and quality; from the steeply pitched form of the higher quality church building to the immediate southeast corner at the Station Street address, the 1-2 storey community and residential buildings to the southern boundary, and to the west, the 2-3 storey residential building to the immediate boundary, transitioning to the 4 storey residential apartment and 3 storey townhouse development further to the west (sites 19, 21 and 33 Cambridge Street).
54. I make specific note here that the residential building to the immediate western boundary (19 Cambridge Street) varies from 3-storeys at the Cambridge Street frontage to a lower 2-storey height at the southern boundary (approximately 1/4 of the built form to the rear being of the lower height). This is contrary to the Application Planning Report prepared by Urbis that states this building is 4-storeys in height (refer page 9, Urbis document). My views in relation to the proposal have not changed based on this observation.
55. There are numerous windows at regular spacing to the eastern elevation of 19 Cambridge Street. Upon my site inspection it is my opinion that a number of these are windows into habitable rooms and should be considered when development occurs to the east.
56. Buildings to the north of the site, across Cambridge Street, are commercial in use. These vary in height from 4 storeys to the eastern and western corners of the development extent (recent commercial development), with an existing older industrial style 1 storey built form immediately to the central area of the development site.
57. It is my opinion that these sites will change in built form and height in the near future, especially the 1 storey central site, reflecting the transitioning character of this section of Box Hill and the opportunities present with the Built Form Precinct D; "4-storey preferred height supporting increased density, with no (or minimal) front and side setbacks to create active frontages onto streets".
58. I acknowledge that the Structure Plan states that new developments should plan for the anticipated future height and density of the precincts that they are within and those immediately adjacent.

ZONING

59. The land at 517 and 519-521 Station Street is currently zoned Public Use Zone Schedule 6 (PUZ6).
60. The Planning Scheme Amendment C194 proposes to rezone the land to Mixed Use Zone (MUZ).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

General Arrangement

61. The proposed development consists of 3 levels of basement car parking, a lower ground level (partial basement including retail, storage, services and plant) and 18-storeys of above ground development.
62. The organisation of the development is in the form of 3 residential buildings over a 2 storey retail and commercial use podium.
63. The residential buildings are listed in the proposal as Building A (18-storeys), Building B (18-storeys) and Building C (6-storeys). Building C forms part of Building B, noted as service apartments and set out as a series of 'studios'.
64. The bulk of the design generally complies with the intent of the General Principles and Design Guidelines and illustrated Framework Concept Plan, including the 'tallest' form of the buildings being to the north east corner and the 'lowest' form being to the south west.
65. Noted departures from this Framework are the bulking of the building into 3 upper level buildings where two of the buildings form a consolidated 'whole' (Building B and C), the removal of the proposed 'service/vehicle access' lane to the western half of the site (related to Building B and Building C being consolidated) and a reconfiguration of the 'improved public open space' to the south east corner of the site, to Station Street and the church interface.

Built Form Height

66. I do not consider this departure of three 'separate' development parts (vertical built form) set out in the General Principles and Design Guidelines to be an issue as other design and street activation benefits are evident as are alternative solutions for access into the site.
67. In my opinion the site layout of the submitted design proposal meets and in some cases exceeds the requirements of the Hansen document.
68. While each of the taller buildings are 18-storeys in height, it is noteworthy that the forms of these buildings are recessive at the upper levels which to some extent reduces their bulk as the height of the building increases.
69. In the case of Building A it is recessive to the southern elevation from Level 11 to Level 17, 12m in total and to a lesser degree to the east, 8m in total.
70. In the case of Building B, it is recessive to the western elevation from Level 12, recessing 10m in total to the Level 17 floor plate.
71. Building A and the majority of Building B sits within Precinct F of the Built Form Precinct map within the Structure Plan.
72. A height of 18 storey is consistent with the intent of the guiding statements for this Precinct, as are the setbacks to the southern and western elevations where the site begins to 'transition'.
73. I support the 18 storey height across the 2 larger buildings, and although Building A is no longer the 'taller' building as sought by the Guidelines, its presence at the corner of the site, the ability for it to be read more in 'the round' due to its siting, and its larger floor plate allow this building to be the major development part within the proposal accordingly, I consider this part of the Guidelines satisfied.
74. The orientation of Building B differs from that set out in the development 'part' within the Framework Concept Plan as it is now oriented east-west.
75. I note that because of this reorientation, part of Building B is in Precinct D of the Built Form Precinct map within the Structure Plan.
76. At 18-storeys this is higher than the "4-storey preferred height supporting increased density" stated in the Structure Plan for Precinct D.

77. Equally it is worth noting that that because of the reorientation lesser parts of Building B are in Precinct F of the Built Form Precinct map within the Structure Plan, representing a significant reduction in the southern boundary zone.
78. I support this reorientation as it allows Building A and Building B to form an urbanised 'street wall' to Cambridge Street, consistent with the guidance documents, and reorients the development away from the southern boundary which is 'transitioning down', rather than the 'transitioning up' towards the Activity Centre as is the case at the northern boundary.
79. The reduction of the Building B built form to the southern boundary has increased the opportunity for the Level 1 plaza adjacent to the Gym, and decreased the over shadowing impact of this built form to the southern neighbouring properties and adjacent Precincts (including Precincts B and A).
80. It is noted that the footprint of Building B is orientated to the northern portion of the site and the encroachment into Precinct D takes up approximately 20% of the available development footprint (Level 7) within the western portion of the land holding within Precinct D.
81. In my opinion the encroachment of the 18 story form of Building B is acceptable in this portion of Precinct D, noting that it results in less than 10% encroachment at the upper levels.
82. Building C is wholly in Precinct D, orientated north south and set off the western boundary by 6m.
83. At 6-storeys this is higher than the "4-storey preferred height supporting increased density" stated in the Structure Plan, although consistent with the heights stated in the General Principles and Design Guidelines.
84. Setbacks occur at the southern boundary where a height of 4 storeys is achieved (or closer to 5 storeys due to the slope in the natural ground down towards the south).
85. When combined with Building B, the footprint of the upper levels development takes up approximately 55% of the available development footprint (Level 1 and above) within the western portion of the land holding within Precinct D.
86. By comparison the built form footprint of the development within Precinct D is over 80% of the available development footprint (podium levels).
87. As noted above the Structure Plan states that new developments should plan for the anticipated future height and density of the precincts that they are within and those immediately adjacent.
88. In my opinion the heights being proposed in the application are consistent with what might be the anticipated future height and density in the Precinct, and the sites immediately adjacent.
89. While I support the overall height of 6-storeys I would prefer to see a clearer transition to a 'setting back' or recessive form of Building C to the western boundary above Level 4, with a suggested increased distance to boundary of 9m at the parapet of Level 6. I have further illustrated this on Sectional Sketches.
90. The Urbis Report notes that the apartment building to the immediately west is nominally 1.6m off the boundary.
91. Based on this information I am concerned about overlooking issues between existing habitable rooms and the proposed development.
92. To avoid this issue at upper levels where the distance to the neighbouring property's windows is less than 9m screening should be required to 1.7m AFF, or as an alternative a distance of 9m should be accomplished between buildings (existing and new) so as screens can be avoided.
93. The same could be noted for the southern elevation of Building C however in this case I am less concerned as the 6m setback establishes a reciprocal development arrangement with the landholdings that are also part of the C194 Amendment.
94. I support in general the setbacks to the other upper levels.
95. The majority of the conditions for height 'bonus' outlined within the General Principles and Design Guidelines have been met in the submission, including a slender projection at the corner of the site, a plot-ratio relation that balances internal function with public space, and a legitimate vertical mix of use (refer Functional Uses further below).
96. Due to the inclusion of two 18-storey buildings the overall integration of scale transition may be slightly hindered, but this is offset by the reorientation of Building B to the north, allowing a more robust transition to the south.
97. As noted above and with the locating of the maximum height of each building towards the north east corner of the site the design concept submitted illustrates a response to a scaled transition across the site towards the neighbouring residential precinct.

98. Although there is a steady reduction in height towards the southern and western site boundaries the material of the development does not vary to support this transition.
99. I note upon review of the plans that the setbacks shown in the plans are greater than that shown in the sections and elevations. For accuracy it is my opinion that these should be corrected and that the dimensions at the minimum should reflect those shown in the plans, which are generally greater.

Pedestrian Spaces and Retail

100. The 'public pedestrian link' through the eastern half of the site is retained and enhanced with a public courtyard at Level 1 of the podium to the southern mid-section of the site, contiguous with Building B.
101. The 'public pedestrian link' has been reduced from the 10-12m proposed in the General Principles and Design Guidelines to 7m.
102. It is my opinion that this lane could be increased in width to the 10m minimum proposed in the Framework, offering an increased opportunity for this laneway to support the 'hawker' trade likely to be evident in this laneway.
103. The lower ground level retail space is accessed from the south-eastern corner of the site adjacent to the church.
104. This entry will align with the proposed pedestrian crossing at Station Street (outside of this application) and provide a safe connection to the public space within the existing Pioneer Park to the eastern side of Station Street and public car parking in the proposed public multi deck car park building.
105. The proposal plans show a wide black line at this boundary which I take to be a large wall to the southern boundary adjacent to the church.
106. I would recommend clarification should be sought on what this line is in the plans to ensure that there is appropriate integration between the paved pedestrian space fronting the retail space and southern boundary and the church property.
107. I support the southernmost retail tenancy connections at grade levels to the southern pedestrian walk.
108. I have concerns on the ramping to the pedestrian entry and retail spaces further north (between grid lines 6 and 7) and in my opinion these do not work, especially where they transition from pavement to retail store.
109. This tenancy is noted as RL 89.900 whereas the street immediately adjacent is annotated at 91.400 (gridlines 5 and 6), 1.5m higher than the retail space. This disparity of levels needs to be addressed at the later stages of the design process.
110. The lower level retail space ends in a 'dead end' aisle to the north.
111. In my opinion this 'dead end' is detrimental to the scheme and further proposals should develop a pedestrian route between Cambridge Street and the lower ground floor level, possibly in the form of escalators.
112. The western retail spaces notate RL's of 94.500 opening onto the laneway, and 95.400 opening onto Cambridge Street (the two retail spaces furthest to the west).
113. I am concerned that no RL's are shown for the retail tenancy spaces to the eastern side of the upper ground level, east of gridline K.
114. When reviewing these levels in Section A it is noted that the southern retail space is above ground and could be supported (having the lower ground tenancy to the south accessing grade).
115. When reviewing Section A and C it is noted that the northern and eastern tenancies do not appear to connect at grade to Cambridge Street or Station Street.
116. I have concerns with the possible lack of connection between the retail tenancy spaces and the existing street level at these locations. I would recommend clarification or further detail be sought to ensure that there are pedestrian connections between these tenancies and the street.
117. The retail tenancy space at the critical corner of Cambridge Street and Station Street is shown as accessed "via internal ramp and stairs" on the plans. This tenancy should be connected to the street.
118. Wind studies show significant wind issues at the southern end of the laneway through the site.
119. This has been mitigated with the inclusion of sliding doors to the end of the laneway and the inclusion of a glazed atrium roof (noted in text).
120. The glazed roof should be clearly annotated on the plans, notably at Level 1.
121. Based on this information I have some concerns on the effect of wind on the pedestrian spaces and retail south of the glazed doors and the Level 1 Plaza.

122. Optimistically I would hope that the wind effect will be mitigated in the long term by semi-mature and mature landscaping and further medium scale development to the south of the proposal to allow a better transition (for the wind movements) from the low rise residential to a higher density scenario.
123. Although the shadow diagrams show overshadowing into this main space and may be considered less than ideal, the shadows cast are varied by date and time of day across the broader outdoor spaces allow patrons flexibility in seating options within the site.
124. It is my understanding upon review of the Urban Design Report submitted by the applicant that the inclusion of the Level 1 public courtyard is intended to support reciprocal development on the land immediately to the south west of the main church buildings.
125. There may be some limitations to this occurring in a 'joined up' sense to any future southern development as the submitted Urban Design Report proposes as the courtyard is effectively two storeys above natural grade at the southern boundary, and the interface includes a lift core and service yard (all shown on the Level 1 plan but not clearly shown on the southern elevation drawing).

Ground Level Setbacks

126. The proposal shows ground level setbacks and enhancement to the landscape plan to part of the southern and western boundaries (not adjacent to the Church), and in the case of the western boundary adjacent to Building C greater than the distances set out in the wording of the Structure Plan and the Hansen Concept Plan.
127. These setbacks are nominated for deep root planting consistent with the intent of the Framework and reflecting best practice principles of having significant planting where built form does not extend to the boundary.
128. I support these deep root planting zones, noting that landscape selections will need to be considered where the width of deep root planting zone to the southern boundary west of Gridline F is shown as being 1.74m wide.
129. I note that a submission has been received from the neighbouring property owner supporting an increased built form at the proposals southern boundary.
130. Although the wording of the Built Form Precinct D proposes "no (or minimal) front and side setbacks" it is my opinion that this wording relates to street setbacks and specifically corner sites where the site has frontages to the 'front and sides'.
131. Based on this and on preparing my advice above I also considered the option to have a zero setback to the southern boundary, effectively securing an opportunity for a 'joined up' approach. To date I have no knowledge of formal application for the sites to the south, and therefore couldn't support the 'zero' setback to the southern boundary and the accompanying overshadowing of private north facing open space that this would generate.
132. It is my opinion that the setback to the southern boundary can be supported at 1.74m at the upper ground level (effectively ground), noting that the setbacks increase immediately above this level to approximately 4.5m at Level 1, and 6.0m and increasing from Level 2 upwards.
133. I support the 4.5m setback at lower level (upper ground level at the western boundary and the deep root planting zone).
134. I would encourage the Responsible Authority to obtain more detailed acoustical information on the plant and exhaust noise that is likely to occur at this location where vents and louvres are shown and to require semi-mature planting as a condition of the permit.

Landscape and Access

135. The Urban Design and Landscape and Public Realm clearly illustrate the projects design commitment to site permeability through the laneway, and to street edge.
136. In plan the design proposal illustrates a strong retail response to the sites street facing boundaries with an appropriate level of interface to the pedestrian entry points to the site, however I have previously noted my concerns on RL's and access and activation of the street edge to the north-eastern and eastern elevations.
137. In the case of the entrance adjacent to the church to the south eastern corner at Station Street the proposal shows a successful integrated public space that in my opinion should be supported.
138. Departing from the vehicle and service access point shown in the General Principles and Design Guidelines and locating the basement entrance to the north-west corner of the site allows for increased pedestrian permeability and safety of access in this interface zone which I support.

139. This relocation of vehicle cross overs to the north-western corner of the site has a marginal negative effect due to the duplication of cross overs.
140. In my view, this relocation is of value to the project overall, including the Station Street interface and should be supported.
141. Further consideration and review will be required of the vehicle cross over areas at the north-western corner of the site, for safety and quality of streetscape.
142. It is noted that the entry to the car basement has a solid wall shown to boundary which will present pedestrian safety issues due to lack of line of sight at the cross over.
143. I recommend that a better hardscape scheme across the car and truck entries so the streetscape surfaces are consistent across the development frontages.

Open space and common spaces

144. The opportunity to utilise more of the northern interface other than the public footpath for public open space and accompanying outdoor retail/hospitality could be developed further in the proposal, notably around the entrance.
145. The outdoor south eastern entrance to the building off Station Street activated by the restaurant and open towards the church to the south east boundary is positive outcome for the design proposal.
146. In my opinion the open space and common spaces meets the requirements of the General Requirements and Design Guidelines document.

Facades

147. The street facades are not highly detailed, but seem appropriate in the plans and architectural renderings provided. However I am of the view that further design detail should be provided in relation to:
 - a) screening of balconies to all buildings (to ensure services including AC condensers are adequately screened);
 - b) screening of the western elevation of Building C; and
 - c) the roof top screening of Building C.
148. I note that the elevations and section of Building C illustrate a roof structure above Level 6. This information is not evident in the plans at Level 7.
149. The inclusion of this structure makes Building C effectively 7 storeys high of which I would discourage unless the setback of the form above Level 4 is adopted. The Level 7 structure would not be of concern if the form shown on the sections is transparent in nature and well developed in design.
150. Setbacks are not provided at the podium levels towards Cambridge Street and Station Street, and the north-eastern corner of Building A consistent with the planning requirements.
151. Setbacks of 5m at Building B and C are shown at Cambridge Street.
152. A setback of more than 20m is provided at the southern portion of Building A, south of gridline E.
153. I support these upper level setbacks to the street edge facades.
154. The provision of weather protection for pedestrian routes, specifically at Station and Cambridge Street is appropriate with the inclusion of street canopies.
155. Canopies which are to provide weather and also likely wind (downward) protection should be supported.
156. Generally I am of the view that the street facades meet the requirements of the brief in the design proposal presented and exceed the expectations when considering weather and wind protection.

Architectural Design

157. In my opinion the architectural quality of the design suffers from a level of homogeneity in its expression using a modernist architectural language that is relatively globalised.
158. The design presents a response that is limited in the distinction of the character of place, 'Box Hill', best illustrated by a limited palette of materials across the 2-3 buildings, lack of material and or façade articulation towards the boundaries, neighbouring context and solar orientation.
159. A variety of precedent images could be drawn upon, both local, national and international, to give a greater sense of character to the various parts of the development, rather than limiting them to a Chinese lamp (2

images) and a large scale commercial development in China (notably designed by Pritzker Award winning architect Zaha Hadid) that have been submitted within the Urban Design Report.

160. The Structure Plan supports a contemporary contribution to design excellence in Box Hill, design that supports a sense of place and the establishment of a skyline interest through diversity and distinction in building heights.
161. In my opinion this proposal meets the intent of the Structure Plan but does not exceed the expectations in the quality of the architectural design response.
162. Pursuit of design excellence should be an important consideration when a development of this scale is being proposed in its transitional location.

Functional Use

163. A Childcare Centre is provided in the design proposal. It is my understanding that this is a requirement of the Contract between Council and the submitter (Golden Age).
164. Aside from the knowledge of the requirement in the contractual arrangements to provide a Childcare Centre, I would support the inclusion of the Childcare Centre in the development.
165. Clause 4.7C of the Box Hill Structure Plan calls for the creation of more diverse forms of housing. The Hansen Partnership's Design Guidelines also identify one of these diversifications as supporting dual key or 3 bedroom alternatives, and proposes that the inclusion of this kind of dwelling diversity, along with other items, may warrant 'bonuses' in height.
166. The inclusion of dual key units is not evident upon my review, although this may be mitigated and/or further developed with the inclusion of a serviced apartment model within the development.
167. I support the inclusion of the 3 bedroom units to the mid to upper levels of Building A and the upper levels of Building B.
168. The Serviced Apartment model proposed in Building C would require more 'front of house' reception areas in the planning of the building, and a 'back of house' allowance too. These are not currently evident in the plans.
169. In general I support the range of housing within the development and the inclusion of light and ventilation into the corridors.
170. An additional 'unique use' for the development might be affordable housing (item 4.7D of the Box Hill Structure Plan) however the inclusion of this is not evident in the design or discussed within the submission.
171. I would encourage the submitter and the Responsible Authority to consider a percentage of affordable housing to further support the height 'bonuses' being pursued across the site in the development proposal.
172. I have not reviewed the scheme against the Victorian Government Apartment Design Standards. It is my understanding that this is not a requirement of this application.

Unique Features

173. The flared setback on Station Street towards the open plaza and the church is a positive and unique design feature providing benefits to the design proposal and the public realm within Box Hill.
174. The internal courtyard equally sets up the opportunity to have an ongoing equitable development conversation with the land under ownership by the church to the central southern portion of the site.
175. The landscape response and urban realm proposal developed by Aspect Studio is supported.

CONCLUSION

176. I support the general arrangement of the design proposal from an urban design perspective.
177. I support the proposed height of the development and the development parts being 18-storeys across Buildings A and B and 6-storeys across Building C. Conditional of this support I would prefer to see a clearer transition to a 'setting back' of the form of Building C to the western boundary above Level 4 as depicted in the attached diagram (9m at the parapet of Level 6).
178. I support the pedestrian spaces and retail interfaces noting that the levels of the retail spaces should all be considered (and possibly reconsidered) in relation to the complexities of the sloping site.
179. I have proposed that the central laneway be made wider to support retail and external shop front activity.
180. I support the splayed setback to the south eastern corner of the site and commend the proposal for its interface to the Church.

181. I support the lower level setback at the western boundary, and at upper levels where the distance to the neighbouring property's windows is less than 9m screening will be required to 1.7m AFF. My preference would be to see a distance of 9m accomplished between buildings (existing and new) so as screens can be avoided.
182. I support the landscape and pedestrian access proposals. My recommendation is to see a more direct connection between the Cambridge Street (upper ground) and the lower ground retail space and the avoidance of the dead end to the aisle.
183. I support the design proposal, although would recommend a refinement of the design response that provides greater distinction of the character of place. Further development of the detail of the facades, especially those at the street frontage and entrances and facades to the boundaries (specifically west lower and upper level, south lower level and the north eastern 'feature' corner") will be required to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
184. I support the inclusion of the various functional uses including the mix of retail, childcare, gym, medical centre and office.
185. I support the range of housing within the development and the inclusion of light and ventilation into the corridors. I recommend that the proposal include a percentage of affordable housing.

STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE

My name is Joshua Mark Wheeler. I have been a director of MGS Architects Pty. Ltd. since 2011 and practice as a Registered Architect at 10-22 Manton Lane, Melbourne, VIC 3000

Qualifications

I have a Bachelor of Architecture with Honours (1996) and a Bachelor of Building Science (1993) from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Professional Roles Architecture

My areas of expertise are in urban design, master planning and architecture. I have over 20 years' experience in these fields of expertise and have drawn upon this experience when preparing this report.

Professional Affiliations

- > Registered Architect, Victoria
- > Registered Architect, New Zealand
- > Registered Architect, California, USA
- > Registered Architect, Ireland

I have undertaken or am undertaking the following commissions for the City of Whitehorse:

- > Harrow Street Car Park, Box Hill (current)
- > Independent design review of tender submissions: 517 and 519-521 Station Street (2016)
- > Nunawading Community Hub Concept Design (2016)
- > Silver Grove Community Hub Community Consultation and Masterplan (2015-16)

Conflict of Interest

I have no known conflict of interest in relation to the preparation of this report.

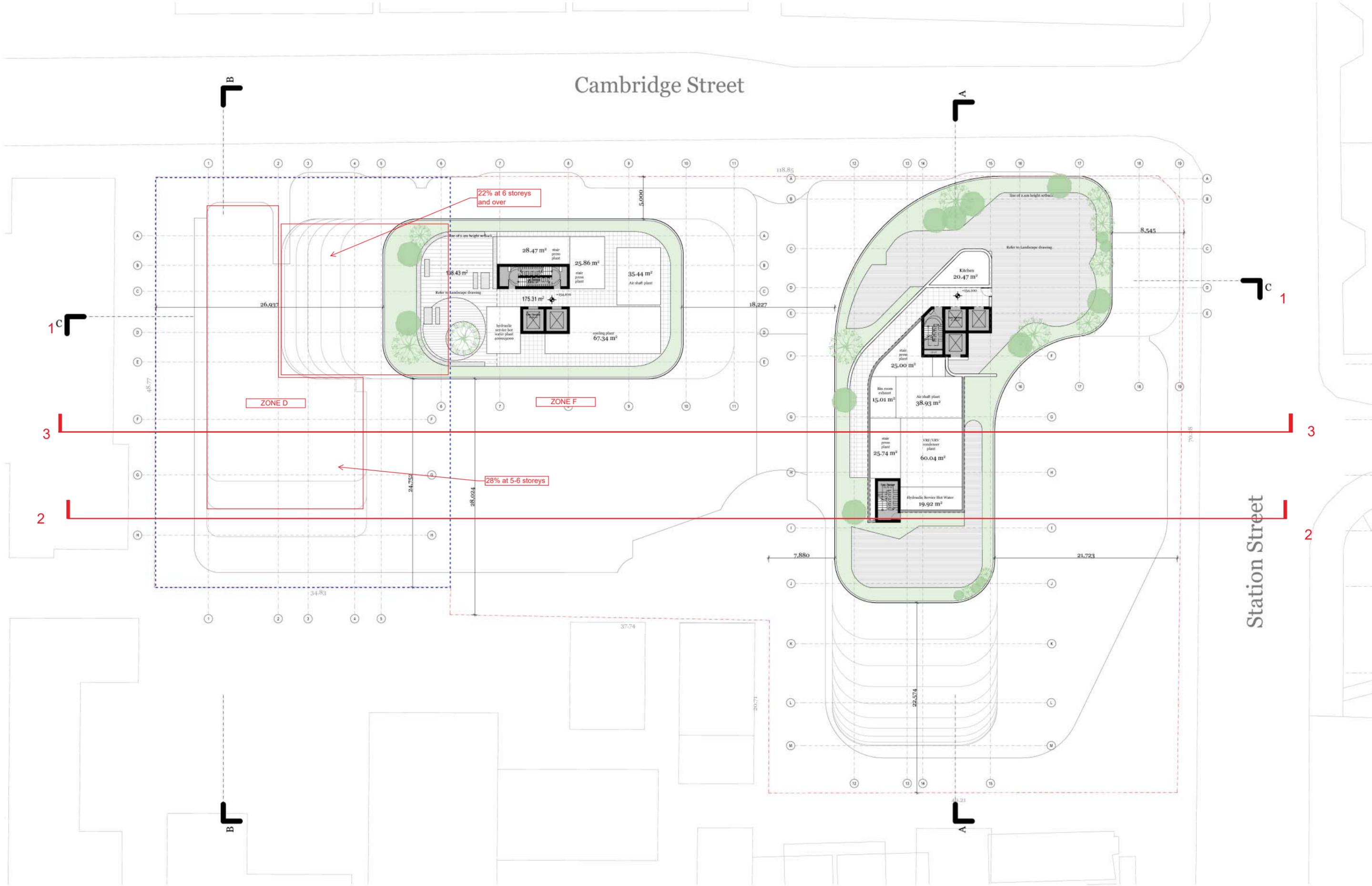
I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.



Prepared by
Joshua Wheeler

Dated: 18 September, 2017

Cambridge Street



22% at 6 storeys and over

28% at 5-6 storeys

ZONE D

ZONE F

Station Street

Rev.	Date	By	Ckd	Description
C	21/12/16	FP/LS	MB	Issue for Town Planning

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Project Name: 517 - 521 Station St
 Project Address: 517 - 521 Station Street, Box Hill, VIC 3128

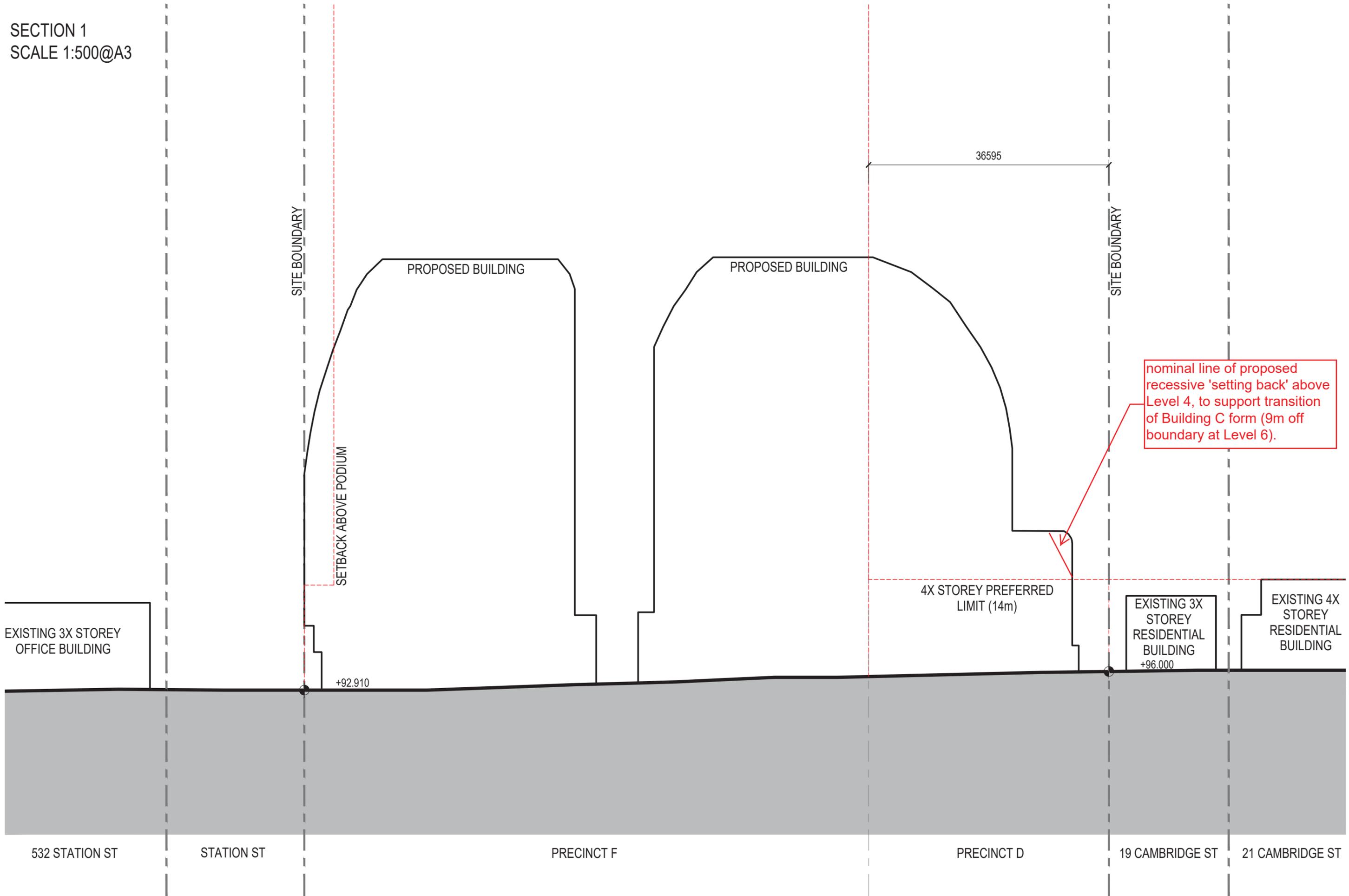
Project Number: 13367
 Drawing Name: Roof
 Scale: 1:200 @ A1
 Date: 21/12/2016

Client: Golden Age

Drawing Number: TP122
 Revision: C

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SECTION 1
SCALE 1:500@A3



EXISTING 3X STOREY
OFFICE BUILDING

SITE BOUNDARY

SETBACK ABOVE PODIUM

PROPOSED BUILDING

PROPOSED BUILDING

SITE BOUNDARY

36595

4X STOREY PREFERRED
LIMIT (14m)

nominal line of proposed
recessive 'setting back' above
Level 4, to support transition
of Building C form (9m off
boundary at Level 6).

EXISTING 3X
STOREY
RESIDENTIAL
BUILDING
+96.000

EXISTING 4X
STOREY
RESIDENTIAL
BUILDING

532 STATION ST

STATION ST

PRECINCT F

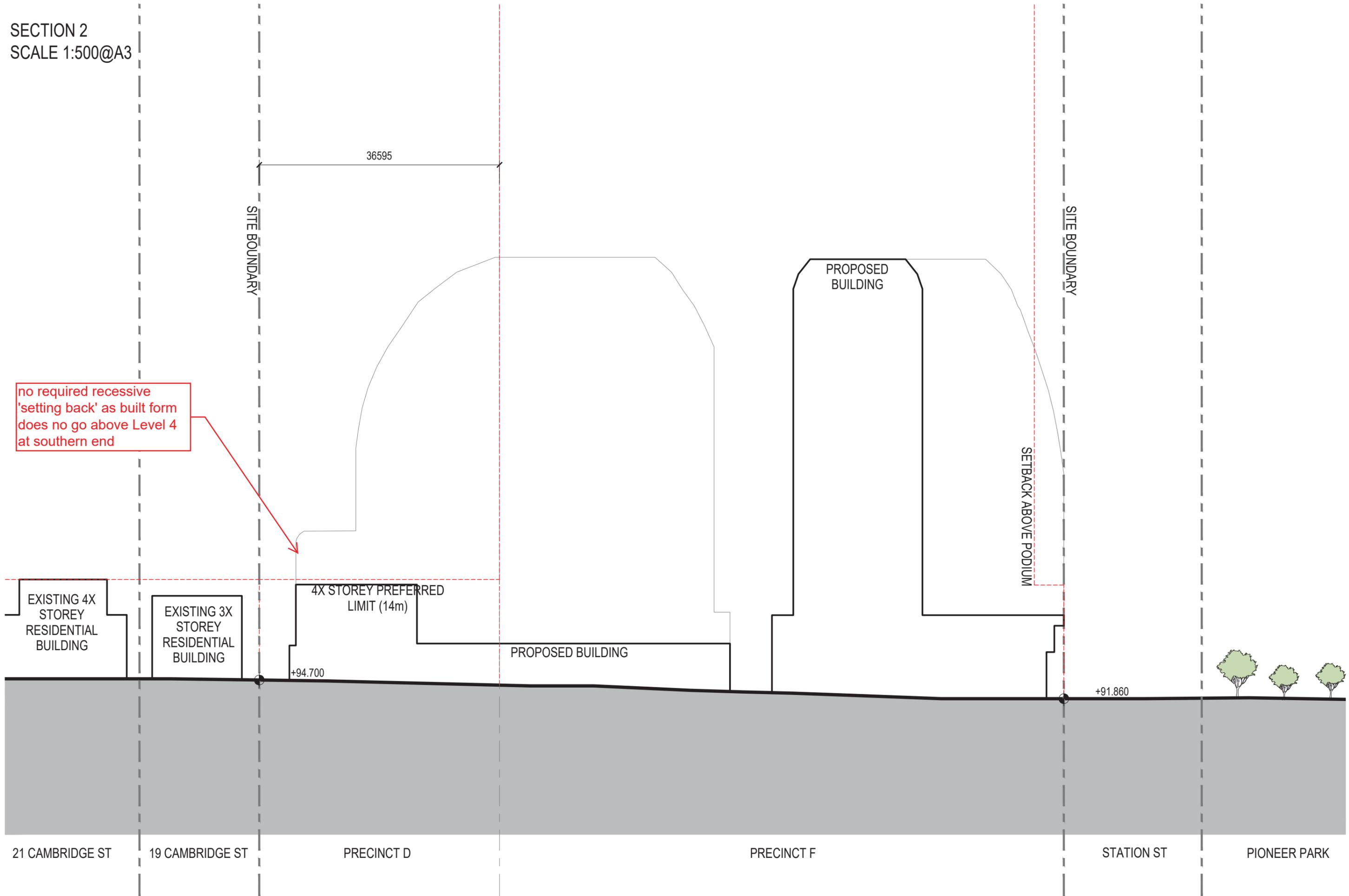
PRECINCT D

19 CAMBRIDGE ST

21 CAMBRIDGE ST

+92.910

SECTION 2
SCALE 1:500@A3



SECTION 3
SCALE 1:500@A3

