

Southern Cross Hospital Wellington – Consulting Building Architectural Statement

Context

The proposal is for a 3 storey building comprising of 2 floors of associated car parking and the upper floor for medical consulting located on the Hanson Street frontage of the existing Southern Cross Hospital site in Newtown. The surrounding context is predominantly a mixture of single storey and elevated villas to the east and south of the site with the context to the north on Hanson Street comprising of medium rise residential blocks and low rise commercial activity. The western aspect of the site faces the bulky industrial aesthetic of the Indoor Sports Centre and School of Dance and Drama.

The design of the proposed building has taken into account the need to balance the function – as a medical consulting facility, with its visual aesthetic within the wider urban context and the functioning relationship to the existing Southern Cross Hospital.

Integral to the design concept, regard has been given to:

- The scale and relationship (bulk and dominance) of the built form to the street, neighbouring properties, existing buildings and activities (including servicing and access) within the site
- The use of sympathetic building materials
- Aspect and outlook

Bulk and Scale

The proposed building is located over the existing on grade carparks on the east of the site between the Hanson Street boundary and the existing hospital. The building employs a high degree of façade articulation and is designed not to replicate the adjacent residential and commercial aesthetic, but to draw upon the elements that make this context such as the scale and size of the adjacent houses to Hanson Street and the orthogonal forms of the buildings to the north of the site.

The building has a scale that is of a similar height to the adjacent properties – to the south, the facade faces the single storey workers cottages and to the north the building height is similar to the adjacent four storey residential apartment block.

Whilst the building façade is informed by the context, the roof form and materials are also influenced by the gabled forms of the adjacent houses.

Form and Materials

The intention of the Hanson Street façade is to perform as a moderator or connector between the residential aesthetic to the south and the commercial aesthetic to the north of the site. The Hanson Street façade is articulated in such a way that the façade has similar width modules that align with the widths of the opposite and adjacent residential houses in Hanson St.

The design of the Hanson Street façade connects the relationship to the houses immediately opposite Hanson St and to the south to the commercial north part of the site – the façade is transitional.

To reduce the bulk and dominance to the north of the building, the building is stepped with the upper floor and lower carpark floors not being vertically aligned. A solid façade to north end to the carpark floors 'grounds' the building and infers a similar aesthetic to solid forms in the immediate area such as the residential garages to Hanson Street.

The Hanson Street façade has a combination of screening with steel frames with horizontal louvres, terracotta battens and glazing behind. Extruded window modules are also applied to the south, east and north facades – the materials selected to these modules are steel frames with prefinished aluminium panels and glazing.

The car parking floors are screened predominately by landscaping and textured precast concrete walls with slotted openings – and due to the sloping nature of Hanson Street, the screening occupies the full two storey carpark wall to the north and part of the Hanson Street east façade.

Entry

The pedestrian entry to the new building is directly accessed off Hanson Street and aligns with the existing hospital entry – the entry is further defined by the use of textural paving that contrasts with the drive through entry/exit. The immediate pedestrian entry to Hanson Street is further accentuated by the incorporation of a higher timber clad ceiling, seating and sculptural vertical elements that give the user of the place a sense of welcoming.

Lighting

The building will require compliant lighting that will be designed in accordance with relevant standards - any lighting will not result in illumination levels at any residential receptor that exceeds 10 lux measured any residential receptor window. Note that the building will be occupied during the day and there is no after-hours occupation of the upper consulting floor.

The exposed carpark to level 1 will be lit by low level internal perimeter lighting and the internal carpark will have ceiling lighting that will also provide a safe environment for the users of the building.

Conclusion

An important factor in the design of this building is the careful consideration to the effects on neighbouring properties. Urban design mitigation measures include ensuring appropriate visual articulation of the materials to assist in reducing any bulk and dominance of the building.

This proposal will contribute positively to the local area and provide an exemplar for commercial activity within an existing context - this has been achieved with the contribution of good façade and edge activation alongside the public amenity – adding value to the existing urban environment.

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