



3 December 2018

General Manager
Maitland City Council
PO Box 220
MAITLAND NSW 2320

Re: DA 2017-0515, 107-117 Swan St. Morpeth

Attention: Erin Murphy

The Morpeth Heritage Conservation Group (MHCG) objects to this development application in its current form. Even though the proponent has made an attempt to soften the impact of this development, it still does not meet the requirements of the Maitland DCP with regards to heritage conservation, character, scale, mass and height.

The site is within the heritage conservation area of Morpeth and is adjacent to the former post office (heritage item number 1209).

Please find below a list of our concerns of our concerns for your consideration:

1. In accordance with Maitland DCP C4 Heritage Conservation (5.3) "Landmark buildings in Conservation Areas which may be heritage items, mansions or public buildings will generally be surrounded by single story buildings, or those of a lesser scale. These landmark buildings should not be used as a precedent for increasing the scale of new buildings. New buildings should rather relate to the scale of existing development around the landmark and respect its prominence." Reference to drawing A216 shows that this objective has not been met with regard to the old Morpeth Post Office.

2. In accordance with Maitland DCP (8e) building height shall be limited to 11m. Given that the proposed residential flats will front Swan Street the reference point should be ground level at Swan Street. Survey plans of the site show the kerb line along the Swan Street frontage has an average Reduced Level (RL) of about 13m and the footpath has an average RL of 13.3m. At most the building height should be limited to RL 24.3m. Proposed roof height is RL 25.26m (see drawing A208) – almost 1.0m above the maximum allowed by the DCP. The proponents have already identified this to be an issue. However, their take on the correct reference point is inappropriate. Plate 20 of the Statement of Heritage Impact shows the original buildings on the site in the 1880's were constructed just above the footpath level along Swan Street, supporting our estimated reference point of RL 13.3m.

3. In accordance with Maitland DCP (9e) – External Appearance - Consideration should be given to the existing character, scale and massing of development in the immediate area.

- Character – Despite an attempt to disguise the top floor under a high roof line, one look at the north elevation on drawing A206 we see the façade of a modern style 3 storey block of units totally out of character with development in the immediate area. Clearly the proposed building does not take influence from the surrounding heritage form and no consideration has been given to the fact that buildings on and either side of the subject land are limited to one or two storeys.
- Scale and mass – Drawing A216 (Swan Street Elevation) shows the proposed development dwarfing buildings either side of the site, including the former Post Office which is of historic significance.

4. DCP C.11 Vehicular Access & Parking - Sites Having a Boundary to a Lane has been ignored. William and Market Streets are to all intents and purposes lanes. In fact Appendix F - Historical Assessment, Part 2, page 8 contains an old site sketch of the subject land identifying Market Street as Market Lane.

5. Sandstone Kerbs – Special efforts should be made to protect the historic sandstone kerbs around the site during and after construction.

Conclusion

Although we agree that the site lends itself to some form of appropriate residential development, the proponent has proffered a design that is completely at odds with the surrounding street scape in character, scale mass and height.

The number of storeys should be limited to a maximum of two which would be in line with surrounding buildings and resolve the maximum height issue. This would also remove any conflict between SEPP 65 and the heritage requirements of the Maitland DCP.

The building style should be more in keeping with existing adjoining buildings and allow for the prominence of the old Post Office to be maintained.

Consideration should be given to the narrowness of the side streets/lanes when designing access to the development and every effort should be made to protect the sandstone kerbs around the site.

We trust that you will consider this submission when making your recommendation and reject DA-2017-0515 in its current form.

I trust you will consider this submission in your determination

Yours faithfully,

Norm Bruhn
President MHCG

Note: The MHCG has not made any reportable political donations in the last 2 years.