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For the attention of the State Commission Assessment Panel

## 100 Rundle Mall, Adelaide

The following advice is in relation to Development Application 25010111. In my capacity as a referral body for advice, I would like to offer the following comments for your consideration.

The proposal is for partial demolition of an existing four-storey tall retail building, provision of an approximately 132-metre tall mixed-use commercial office building to the northern third of the site, connected to the retained section of the existing building.

The proposal was presented at two Design Review sessions. The following advice has been informed by the Design Review panel recommendations.

From considering the material supplied with the referral and evaluating the design merit of the project, I am pleased to offer my general support to the planning application, as I support the project ambition for a premium commercial offering in this unique location and recognise the benefits of increased daytime population this significant development can bring to this part of the city. I also acknowledge and support the design development during the Design Review process, including the review of the built form composition.

### Site context

The subject site spans between North Terrace and Rundle Mall and the full length of Charles Street. It is rectangular in plan with a rectangular indent at the northwest corner. The site is occupied by the Adelaide Central Plaza building (David Jones department store and specialty retailers with cafes and food court on the lower ground floor). The site includes a dual lane driveway at the northwest corner, providing vehicle access from North Terrace to the existing basement for loading and services. The adjoining site at 203-207 North Terrace has Right of Way (RoW) access for this portion of the site for rear vehicle access. The existing retail building has primary pedestrian access points from Rundle Mall and North Terrace with an additional access point from Charles Street. The northern frontage also includes a Tiffany & Co retail tenancy with independent access from North Terrace. The building is connected to a mixed-use building to the east of Charles Street via a two/three-

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storey tall, enclosed pedestrian bridge, providing direct access between David Jones retail floors and Wilson Parking (multi-level public car parking). The site includes a fall of approximately 1.2 metres from south to north.

The new building is proposed to the northern portion of the site (approximately 1,520 square metres).

North Terrace is a key pedestrian promenade and cultural boulevard that provides an important northern edge to the city. The site is directly opposite the cultural and civic hub, including the South Australian Museum, State Library of South Australia and Art Gallery of South Australia. On the southern side of North Terrace, the surrounding properties include State Heritage Places (SHPs) to the west of the site (former G&R Wills Warehouse buildings at 203 - 207 and 201-202 North Terrace). The 201-202 North Terrace site includes a recently completed 32-storey tall student accommodation development ('The Switch') above the heritage building. To the east of Charles Street, a mixed-use building exists with ground floor retail (Charles Street Plaza), multi-level car parking structure (Wilson Parking) and residential apartments above. The wider character of this section of North Terrace is a mix of protected heritage buildings (State and Local Heritage Places), commercial, civic and residential buildings, including a number of purpose-built student accommodation developments. The existing buildings generally have zero setback to the street boundary with high solid-to-void ratio in response to the heritage context.

Charles Street is a north-south small street between North Terrace and Rundle Mall, providing connections to the greater pedestrian network of the city. Vehicle access for service and loading is permitted (from the northern end only). The street was recently upgraded by the City of Adelaide, including creation of a kerb-less street to prioritise pedestrian access and limit vehicle access, provision of stone paving and improvements to street lighting. Charles Street is largely enclosed by the bridge structure spanning across the central portion of the street. I understand the project brief includes the full retention of the bridge structure with a facade upgrade to the north elevation.

Notable tall buildings in the locality include 'The Switch' and 'Realm Apartments' (a 40-storey tall residential mixed-use building). A recent approval also exists for a 34-storey (169 metres) tall mixed-use building (Keystone Tower) at 254 North Terrace. These recently completed buildings are generally located behind retained heritage street buildings.

#### **Built Form and Architectural Expression**

The proposed building height is 31 storeys above ground (plus two below ground levels), and approximately 132-metres tall to the top of the parapet. The built form comprises a five-storey (approximately 26 metres) tall building base, a two-storey tall recessive transition element and a 24-storey tall upper tower form.

The footprint of the base element extends to the north, east and the RoW boundary (west). The glazed wall line along the North Terrace boundary is set back approximately two metres on the ground floor and one metre for the levels above. The glazed wall line on the Charles Street frontage includes a one metre setback. Feature profiled columns are set on the boundary and extend the full height of the base element, creating a number of small recesses along the street frontages. Secondary vertical elements are proposed in between the main columns and additional fins are proposed to the level one glazing to respond to the datum line of

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the adjoining State Heritage Places (SHPs). Deep columns are proposed with the intent to respond to the masonry character of North Terrace, and the spacing and rhythm of the vertical elements are also informed by the neighbouring SHPs. Natural limestone cladding and dark bronze coloured aluminium/steel sections are proposed as the main materials for the building base.

The two-storey tall transitional element is largely glazed with a diagonal setback on the northeast corner with perimeter soft landscaping and externally expressed circular columns.

The upper built form footprint includes tapered setback alignments along the north boundary and orthogonal setback along the east boundary, with curved corners. Shallow vertical recesses are proposed to the north, east and south elevations. Along the western edge, the wall alignment is offset, protruding over the RoW boundary, with the intent to extend a consistent glazed facade treatment on the western elevation where the lift/stair core is proposed. The facades of the upper built form continue past the roof plant level to provide an integrated screening that increases in height towards the west.

The overall building height does not raise any concerns, due to the site's central location and the comparable heights of recently completed and approved developments in the locality. I also support the design intent for masonry materiality and the provision of a building base that is informed by the existing character of North Terrace.

In terms of the overall built form composition, I strongly support the height of the building base, which has been reduced through the Design Review process from 10 to six to five storeys, informed by the testing of massing options. In my view, the proposed building base successfully responds to the established built form scale of the North Terrace streetscape and reflects clarity of internal programming. I also support the orthogonal base form that holds the northeast street corner and elongated upper tower form.

I strongly support the architectural expression of the building base with increased depth and three dimensionality, which in my view, convincingly responds to the classical rhythm and masonry materiality of the North Terrace streetscape. I am particularly supportive of the three-dimensional detailing at the top of the building base, which has resulted in a refined and assertive expression.

I support the continuation of a consistent facade treatment to the west elevation of the tower and the intent for a building in the round. In addition, I support the inclusion of continuous vertical recesses to the three elevations that emphasises the vertical expression.

I strongly support the intent for high-quality materiality, which in my opinion is critical to the overall success of the development given the development's significant scale and location. To that end, I support the inclusion of the facade upgrade to the northern elevation of the Charles Street bridge structure, with the intent to achieve a coherent overall composition with the new building base. I recommend submission of a physical material samples board to confirm the final selection of external materials and finishes, commensurate with the premium development envisaged.

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### **Ground Floor Configuration and Public Realm**

The proposal includes a double height open lobby on the North Terrace frontage, level with the footpath. A cafe/retail tenancy is proposed to the northeast corner between the North Terrace main entry and the Charles Steet entry. A lounge area is proposed on the northwest corner in front of a core for 12 lifts (two adjoining cores of six lifts each) and egress stairs on the west boundary. The level transition between the new ground floor lobby and existing retail ground floor is proposed internally, with a new feature circular vertical connection with escalators. An additional side entry is proposed from the existing west service driveway for direct bicycle access via lifts to the EoT facility on level four. The existing fire egress stair to Charles Street is proposed to be retained and incorporated within the new building footprint. The proposal also retains the existing pedestrian bridge over Charles Street, which overlaps with the majority of the east elevation of the new building base.

I support the provision of a publicly accessible and spatially grand foyer with seamless level transitions from the streets. I also support the refinements to the ground floor configuration during the Design Review process, which has resulted in improved clarity of entrances. I recommend ongoing design development of the ground floor configuration to achieve seamless transition to the existing retail floor, while satisfying fire separation requirements between structurally independent buildings.

The new building uses existing servicing and loading arrangements via the west driveway off North Terrace. No additional vehicle access points or onsite parking spaces are proposed. I support the removal of the gates and increased activation along this frontage with cyclists' access, which can assist with passive surveillance. To this end, I recommend demonstration of the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) risk management strategy for the recessed areas outside of the egress stair exit points to ensure safety for the bicycle users and general public.

The proposal includes canopies over the North Terrace footpath for parts of the frontage (five metres above the entry point and 4.65 metres tall in between the feature columns). I support reduction of the canopy heights following the Design Review process to provide effective weather protection and pedestrian amenity as well as creating human scale elements at the street level.

I continue to encourage the project team to explore opportunities to revisit the project brief for the retention of the existing bridge structure over Charles Street. Acknowledging the importance of providing direct pedestrian access to the existing retail floors, I am concerned by its significant detrimental impact on the amenity of Charles Street. I am also of the view that the retention is likely to pose significant structural and feasibility challenges during the construction of the new tower. Further, in my view, this development, which now includes the facade upgrade of the bridge structure, presents a rare opportunity to repair the urban environment currently being compromised by the constricted undercover condition. As a minimum, I recommend consideration given to removal or relocation of ancillary spaces (offices and services) while maintaining direct pedestrian links, with the view to reducing the built form mass and the resultant impact on Charles Street.

I also recommend discussion with City of Adelaide regarding the city-wide public realm vision for the southern side of North Terrace, as this project has the potential to set a positive precedent for this significant boulevard. While the submitted ground

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floor plan indicates provision of consistent large format pavers to the building perimeter, including the North Terrace footpath and Charles Street, I note that the existing paving for North Terrace and Charles Street are different in terms of size, colour and paving patterns. I recommend confirmation of the perimeter paving arrangement, with the view to achieving a consistent high-quality outcome for the precinct.

### **Commercial Floor Planning**

Commercial office floors are proposed on levels five to 30, supported by the lift and amenity core to the centre of the west boundary. Levels five and six (recessed transitional floors) are proposed for commercial office and shared meeting areas with associated outdoor terraces. The floors above level seven include a minor angled setback along the northern boundary and curved corners.

I support the general location of the core to the west boundary. I also acknowledge and support the design development during the Design Review process, including rationalisation of the core arrangement and improved internal planning efficiency. I also support the removal of the previously proposed isolated office floor within the building base element, which in my view has resulted in increased clarity in internal programming.

I strongly support the inclusion of shared areas with associated outdoor spaces on levels five and six, which in my view, can provide high value amenity for potential tenants. To that end, I recommend provision of additional landscaping details to support provision and ongoing success of meaningful soft landscaping to these outdoor areas.

### **Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)**

I understand the proposal will be designed to satisfy the sustainability requirements (6 Star GreenStar Building v1/5.5 Star NABERS ratings) to qualify within the premium commercial office category. Given the high standard demanded for the premium commercial offering, the sustainability measures form a critical part of design considerations and will impact the architectural proposition.

I support the engagement of a specialist consultant, and I anticipate ongoing development and incorporation of integrated sustainability initiatives during the upcoming stages of design development and urge thorough investigation of the impacts of the sustainability performance requirements beyond services and equipment, including but not limited to:

- facade systems, including solar gain management and heat conductivity of materials
- construction techniques
- occupant wellbeing
- stretch targets.

### **Advice summary**

To ensure the most successful design outcome is achieved the State Commission Assessment Panel may like to consider particular aspects of the project, which would benefit from protection as part of the planning permission, such as:

- final external material selections, including confirmation of high-quality integral finishes supported by the provision of physical samples
- demonstration of CPTED management strategy for the recessed areas outside of the western egress stair exit points

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- removal or relocation of ancillary spaces (offices and services) of the existing bridge structure over Charles Street
- confirmation of the perimeter paving arrangement, with the view to achieving a consistent high-quality outcome for the precinct
- provision of additional soft landscaping details.

Yours sincerely



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