

13 November 2025

DA202241098 RECONSIDERATION– BLOCKS 2, 7, AND 8 SECTION 5 CITY SECTION 97 PLANNING REPORT - ADDENDUM

1. Introduction and Purpose

This addendum to the Section 97 Planning Report submitted with the original DA has been prepared in support of a Reconsideration of the Development Application (DA 202241098) for Blocks 2, 7, and 8 Section 5 City. The reconsideration incorporates significant design modifications to the building heights, bulk, and massing in response to updated guidance received from the National Capital Authority (NCA) and further engagement with the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) and relevant referral Entities.

This addendum should be read in conjunction with the original Section 97 Planning Report dated May 2024 and the updated architectural plans prepared by Turco and Associates dated September 2025 as well as other supporting documents submitted with this application.

1.1 Key Changes in the Reconsideration Proposal

The reconsideration proposal introduces a **stepped building height approach** that responds directly to NCA guidance regarding the University Avenue frontage:

- **Building A (Block 2):** Steps from RL607.862 (7 metres above existing building height) at the University Avenue frontage up to RL614.7
- **Building B (Block 7):** Positioned at RL617 further away from University Avenue
- **Enhanced urban design response** that better integrates with the University Avenue streetscape
- **Maintained public benefits** through ground floor activation and landscape plaza on Block 8

2. Revised Development Proposal

2.1 Building Heights and Massing

The reconsideration proposal refines the building heights to create a more sensitive interface with University Avenue while maintaining the overall development objectives. Based on the Architectural Plans, the following summarises the updated development parameters:

Building A (Block 2):

- Maximum height: RL614.7 (reduced from RL617)
- Stepped configuration from RL607.862 at University Avenue frontage
- 14 storeys with mixed-use residential and commercial components
- Total GFA: 9,783m²

Building B (Block 7):

- Maximum height: RL617 (maintained)
- 15 storeys positioned further from University Avenue
- Mixed-use residential configuration
- Total GFA: 7,040m²

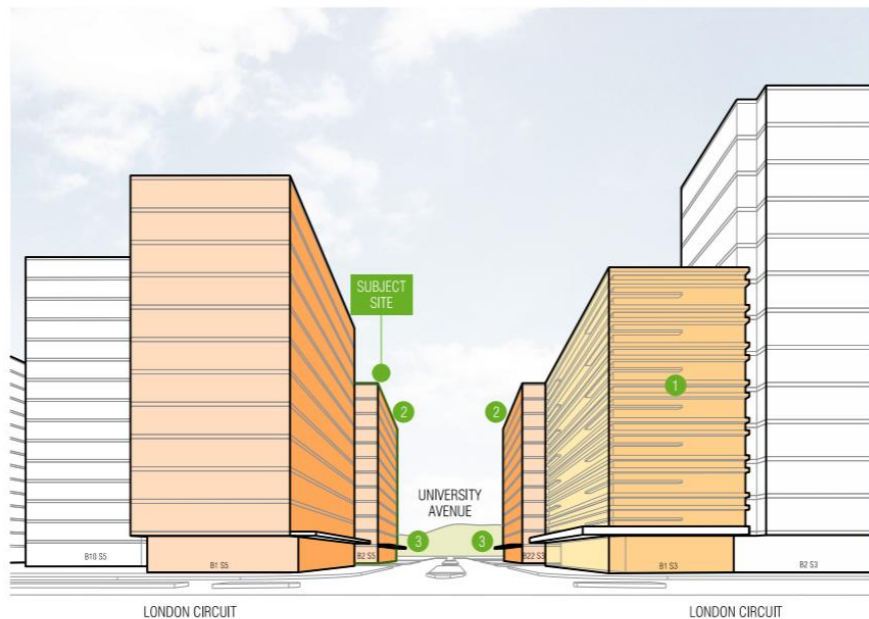
Total Development:

- Combined GFA: 17,335m² (incl. basement GFA areas)
- 155 residential units (73 x 1-bed, 62 x 2-bed, 20 x 3-bed)
- Ground floor commercial and community facilities
- Five levels of basement parking (226 car spaces)

2.2 Response to NCA Guidance

The stepped height approach directly responds to NCA concerns regarding the University Avenue interface by:

1. **Reducing visual impact** on the University Avenue streetscape through lower building height at the frontage
2. **Creating gradual transition** from the existing built form to the proposed development
3. **Maintaining urban design coherence** while respecting the Main Avenue character
4. Preserving important view corridors along University Avenue



LEGEND

- 1 EXISTING ANZ BUILDING RETAINED
- 2 HEIGHT ALONG UNIVERSITY AVENUE SET AT EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT PLUS 7m
- 3 AWNINGS PROPOSED TO UNIVERSITY AVENUE TO REINFORCE EXISTING AWNING ON ANZ BUILDING

3. Urban Design Analysis and Merit

3.1 Integration with Section 5 Character

The reconsideration maintains and enhances the established urban character of Section 5 City while providing a more sensitive response to University Avenue:

Historical Context Preservation:

- Continues the NCDC-era approach to building placement and scale
- Maintains the perimeter building configuration around the central AON Building
- Respects the deliberate modernist composition established in the 1960s-70s

Contemporary Design Response:

- Stepped height configuration provides visual interest and urban variety
- Architectural articulation responds to both historical and contemporary contexts
- Ground floor colonnade elements maintain pedestrian amenity

3.2 Relationship to University Avenue

University Avenue, as identified in the National Capital Plan, forms part of the symbolic Main Avenues radiating from City Hill. The reconsideration design recognises this significance by:

Streetscape Sensitivity:

- Lower building height (RL607.862) at the University Avenue frontage reduces visual dominance
- Stepped configuration creates a more human-scaled interface
- Maintains important sight lines and urban geometry

Built Form Transition:

- Gradual height increase away from University Avenue
- Responds to the existing character while enabling appropriate intensification
- Creates architectural interest through varied building heights



LEGEND

- 1 EXISTING ANZ BUILDING RETAINED
- 2 HEIGHT ALONG UNIVERSITY AVENUE SET AT EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT PLUS 7m
- 3 AWNINGS PROPOSED TO UNIVERSITY AVENUE TO REINFORCE EXISTING AWNING ON ANZ BUILDING

3.3 Consistency with Planning Framework

The reconsideration aligns with key planning objectives identified in comparable Section 5 developments, drawing from established precedents such as the hotel and commercial development at Blocks 4 and 5 Section 5 City and development in Section 3 City adjacent.

Urban Intensification Goals:

- Supports ACT Planning Strategy objectives for city centre intensification
- Provides housing diversity in a central location well-served by public transport
- Contributes to compact city development principles

National Capital Plan Compliance:

- Responds to Special Requirements for Territory Land in the City Centre
- Maintains building height within RL617 limits while providing design sensitivity
- Supports the symbolic importance of Main Avenues through thoughtful design response

4. Public Benefit Assessment

4.1 Enhanced Public Benefits

The reconsideration design maintains and enhances the public benefits identified in the original proposal:

Urban Design Benefits:

- Improved streetscape integration through stepped height configuration
- Enhanced pedestrian experience along University Avenue
- Better response to Main Avenue character while enabling appropriate development

Housing and Community Benefits:

- **155 residential units** contributing to city centre housing supply
- **Diverse apartment sizes** (1, 2, and 3-bedroom configurations) supporting housing choice
- **Ground floor activation** through commercial and community facilities

Economic Benefits:

- Significant capital investment in city centre renewal
- Construction and ongoing employment opportunities
- Increased rates and tax revenue for ACT Government
- Support for Light Rail patronage through residential population increase

4.2 Public Realm Enhancements

The reconsideration maintains the landscape plaza on Block 8 with enhanced public amenity:

Kiosk Integration:

- 4 kiosks totalling 100m² GFA providing commercial activation
- Integration with landscape design and public access
- Support for small business and entrepreneurship

Landscape Design:

- High-quality landscape elements supporting urban canopy
- Public space activation through integrated design
- Enhanced pedestrian connectivity and amenity

5. Design Merit and Architectural Response

5.1 Architectural Excellence

The reconsideration design demonstrates architectural excellence through:

Contextual Response:

- **Building A colonnade elements** echo traditional Canberra architectural language
- **Building B sculptural balconies** reference local design elements (bus shelter forms)
- **Material palette** responds to existing Section 5 character while providing contemporary interpretation

Design Innovation:

- Stepped height configuration provides unique urban form
- Mixed-use integration supports diverse community needs
- Sustainability initiatives including solar panels, green roofs, and all-electric building systems

5.2 Public Interface Design

The ground floor public interface has been carefully designed to maximise activation:

University Avenue Interface:

- Lower building height creates more appropriate scale relationship
- Ground floor commercial uses provide street activation
- Colonnade elements maintain pedestrian comfort and continuity

Marcus Clarke Street Interface:

- Building B positioning provides corner definition
- Mixed-use ground floor supports diverse activities
- Integration with landscape plaza enhances public realm

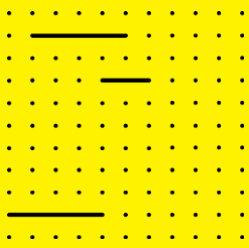
6. Consistency with Strategic Planning Context

6.1 ACT Government Policy Alignment

The reconsideration aligns with key ACT Government strategic objectives:

Transport for Canberra (2012-2031):

- **Proximate to light rail** (Stage 1 and future Stage 2) supporting public transport use
- **Active travel infrastructure** through end-of-trip facilities and bicycle parking
- **Reduced car dependency** through central location and public transport access



ACT Planning Strategy:

- Urban intensification in identified areas
- Compact city development supporting efficient infrastructure use
- Design excellence contributing to Canberra's landscape setting

City and Gateway Urban Design Framework (2018):

- **Diverse residential offerings** supporting city centre vibrancy
- **Active ground floor uses** contributing to street life
- **Sustainable building design** supporting environmental objectives

6.2 National Capital Plan Considerations

The reconsideration specifically addresses National Capital Plan requirements:

City Hill Precinct Context:

- **Respect for Main Avenue hierarchy** through sensitive building height treatment
- **Support for public transport networks** along London Circuit and University Avenue
- **Active frontages** supporting vibrant city centre character

Special Requirements Compliance:

- **Building heights** within prescribed limits with design sensitivity
- **Urban design quality** supporting recognisable city edge
- **Transport integration** supporting multi-modal access

7. Sustainability and Resilience

7.1 Environmental Performance

The reconsideration maintains high environmental standards:

Building Performance:

- **All-electric building systems** supporting ACT renewable energy goals
- **Solar panel integration** for renewable energy generation
- **Green roof systems** supporting urban canopy and stormwater management
- High-performance building envelope exceeding minimum standards

Urban Heat Island Mitigation:

- **Landscape plaza** providing cooling and biodiversity benefits
- **Building orientation** optimising solar access and natural ventilation
- **Materials selection** supporting thermal performance

7.2 Community Resilience

The development supports community resilience through:

Housing Security:

- **Diverse housing options** supporting different household types
- **Central location** reducing transport costs and supporting accessibility
- **Long-term housing supply** contributing to market stability

Economic Resilience:

- **Mixed-use development** supporting diverse economic activity
- **Local employment** through construction and ongoing operations
- **Small business support** through kiosk and commercial space provision

8. Traffic and Access Considerations

8.1 Transportation Integration

The reconsideration supports multi-modal transportation:

Public Transport Access:

- **Light Rail proximity** (existing Stage 1 and planned Stage 2)
- **Bus route access** along University Avenue and surrounding streets
- Pedestrian connectivity to transport nodes

Vehicle Access:

- **227 car parking spaces** across five basement levels
- **Access via Marcus Clarke Street** minimising University Avenue impact
- **Car sharing and EV charging** supporting sustainable transport choices

Active Travel:

- Bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities supporting cycling
- Pedestrian amenity through colonnade and landscape design
- Integration with existing pathway networks

9. Implementation and Delivery

9.1 Development Staging

The reconsideration maintains the comprehensive development approach:

Construction Methodology:

- Demolition of existing buildings on Blocks 2 and 7
- Basement construction across three blocks
- Coordinated building delivery ensuring site safety and efficiency
- Landscape completion concurrent with building works

Public Realm Integration:

- **Block 8 landscape plaza** completed as integral component
- **Kiosk construction** supporting early activation
- **Pedestrian connectivity** maintained throughout construction

9.2 Design Review Process

The reconsideration has incorporated feedback from:

National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP):

- **Four review sessions** informing design development
- **Building footprint refinement** responding to site constraints
- **Height and massing adjustments** improving urban design outcomes
- **Public interface enhancement** supporting activation objectives

National Capital Authority:

- **Height stepping guidance** directly incorporated in reconsideration design
- **University Avenue interface sensitivity** addressed through reduced frontage height
- **Urban design coherence** maintained while responding to concerns

10. Conclusion

10.1 Design Merit Summary

The reconsideration proposal for Blocks 2, 7, and 8 Section 5 City demonstrates significant design merit through:

1. **Responsive design approach** incorporating NCA guidance on height stepping
2. **Enhanced University Avenue interface** through reduced frontage building height
3. **Maintained development objectives** while improving urban design sensitivity
4. **Comprehensive public benefit delivery** through housing, commercial, and public realm components

10.2 Strategic Alignment

The proposal aligns with key strategic planning objectives:

Urban Design Excellence:

- Contributes to Section 5 City's architectural character while providing contemporary interpretation
- Responds to historical NCDC planning principles through thoughtful building placement
- Creates visual interest through stepped height configuration

Public Benefit Delivery:

- Provides 155 residential units supporting city centre housing supply
- Delivers high-quality public realm through landscape plaza and ground floor activation
- Supports economic development through construction investment and ongoing operations

Sustainability Leadership:

- Achieves high environmental performance through building design and renewable energy integration
- Supports transport sustainability through public transport proximity and active travel facilities
- Contributes to urban canopy and biodiversity through landscape design

10.3 Recommendation

The reconsideration proposal represents a refined and improved design response that:

- **Directly addresses NCA concerns** through height stepping approach
- Maintains comprehensive development benefits while improving design sensitivity
- **Supports ACT Government strategic objectives** for city centre intensification and design excellence
- **Delivers significant public benefits** through housing supply, economic investment, and public realm enhancement

The proposal is recommended for approval as a well-considered response to planning guidance that delivers exceptional urban design outcomes for Section 5 City and the broader Canberra community.

This addendum has been prepared in accordance with Section 97 of the Planning and Development Act 2007 and should be read in conjunction with the original Section 97 Planning Report and supporting technical documentation.