



GOLDFIELDS AND COX REBOOT 627 CHAPEL STREET

WED, 20/06/2018 - 07:40 LAURENCE DRAGOMIR

The new owners of 627 Chapel Street South Yarra, Goldfields, are progressing with plans for a 24-storey commercial building on the site, after previous owners' Fridcorp's plans to develop an Elenberg Fraser-designed residential tower were quashed at VCAT.

First covered on Urban.com.au in 2016, the 37-storey residential tower was proposed to rise to a height of 127.5m (including roof plant) and provide space for cafes, offices and 372 apartments.

Goldfields, who acquired the site in December 2017, have since engaged COX Architecture to design the 89m building, which would replace the existing office building of 5,600 sqm and provide the City of Stonnington with a benchmark commercial office development.

The brief that Goldfields gave to their consultant team was concise;

We wanted to respond positively and sympathetically to the reasons why Stonnington and the tribunal members at VCAT had rejected the previous proposal.

We identified the site's commercial and retail capabilities and ultimately realised we had a unique opportunity to deliver a building that could realistically be classified as the best office building outside the Melbourne CBD.

Together we then set the team a challenge to create a beautifully designed building that will encourage interaction with the streetscape at pedestrian level whilst still looking, feeling and functioning like a premium grade office building.

- Lachlan Thompson, Goldfields COO

Speaking with COX Architecture, the design team made it clear that flexible commercial office accommodation above a strong active street edge was paramount in delivering a building which would not only add to the streetscape but also provide the Forrest Hill precinct with the diversity of programme expected.

In attempting to achieve as much active frontage as possible, COX employed a different approach to where an entry lobby would typically be located. Instead of locating it along the Chapel Street frontage, the design team located the entry lobby off Daly Street, freeing up Chapel Street with more active and engaging uses for pedestrians meandering along the busy high street.

This also gives the building greater prominence as a “gateway site” linking back to South Yarra Station and improving the permeability of the surrounding street network.

This first 12m of street wall, emphasises COX, was one of the most critical aspirations for the project in how it responded to and enriched the pedestrian environment. This resulted in what the team termed a “3D ground plaza” whereby the end-of-trip facilities were elevated to level 1 alongside further retail opportunities, extending the activity from the street vertically not just horizontally to the street.

Moving up, the design of the tower responds to Goldfield Group’s brief for a pure office building that responds and challenges to the nature of workplace design, creating an office environment based on the ideas of amenity and lifestyle.

The office tower employs a side core configuration providing an ideal floor plate for tenants that allows them flexibility in how they fit-out and occupy the space(s).

To reduce the mass of the tower, the architects have provided the form with strong vertically articulated breaks across its height, complemented by vertical glazed fins which provide solar shading not too dissimilar to COX’s Conservatory project in the CBD.

This is further supported by landscaping voids which not only provide the built form with further articulation but extend the arbour screen from the ground up the building.

According to the design team, these “breaks” provide dynamic spaces which make a positive contribution of the amenity of the workplace, allowing workers to better connect with nature.

The design proposal for 627 Chapel Street takes the opportunity to make the most of this unique island site in Forrest Hill.

A 3m setback pushes the building back from Chapel Street, this allows for greater public space at street level and ensures that the Capitol remains visible on approach. The podium is defined by the green landscaped arbor - a permeable screen that wraps the building and connects through to the Daly Street landscaped street.

Each elevation has been split by a vertical break, providing a series of slender volumes, breaking down the building mass. Further interest on the facade is generated through the implementation of fins for solar shading (East, North and West facades).

Terraced gardens provide natural setbacks at 50m and towards the top of the building a series of roof terraces and a green roof that provide new workplace amenity.

- COX Architecture Design Response

627 Chapel Street in-situ. Planning Image: COX Architecture
Alongside end-of-trip facilities which provide above and beyond the number of bikes required under local policy, the 1,510 square metre island site benefits from its close proximity to South Yarra Station and tram corridors along Chapel Street and Toorak Road.

This is not dissimilar to other emerging commercial precincts in Cremorne, Collingwood and Richmond which benefit from strong public transport links and good walkability.

