Architect Statement – The Hotel development, Cowes

The proposed built form respects the historic arrival of Cowes by ferry at the pier opposite the hotel. The scale and period of the retained buildings preserve a human-scale gateway to Cowes' main street, Thompson Avenue.

Although the DDO11 allows zero setback podiums and taller rear envelopes, the proposal allows wider visual connections between the foreshore, parkland, jetty, and the township, providing broader public outlooks than currently permitted at the corner of The Esplanade and Thompson Avenue.

Retention of the existing corner building reinforces the historic relationship between Cowes, the foreshore, the jetty, and Westernport. The porous frontages encourage interaction and visual interest between inside and outside spaces in all weather conditions. The retained buildings remain below key sightlines when viewed from the south to north on Thompson Avenue.

The scale of the redevelopment to the east of the site is visually moderated by the retained buildings. A vertical element referencing the iconic Phillip Island feature of a chicory kiln provides a deliberate separation between the historic building form and contemporary architecture. The eastern build adopts a contemporary seaside character, encouraging social use with indoor–outdoor dining beneath retractable awnings and umbrellas.

Materiality and colour palettes have been softened to respond to coastal light conditions and foreshore views. Finishes are intended to reduce glare and respond sensitively to seasonal lighting while maintaining architectural form. Final material selections will be resolved at a later design stage and will complement the site context.

Rooftop plant and access will comply with BCA requirements and are positioned to minimise visual impact from public viewpoints. Rooftop amenities, including a bar, are recessed from the Esplanade frontage and integrated with staff and administration areas. These elements present as standard building levels rather than plant rooms and remain modest in scale.

The proposed development represents real evolution and making of place at a local scale.

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