

RMA/2024/2460 – Mitre 10 Mega Prestons

Final Comments on Signage

David Hattam, 16/12/2024

The Site

The site is located to the South of Prestons Road Commercial Core (now Commercial Local) zoned land, where some signage would be expected.

There are some areas where people may be sensitive to signage, in particular using the eye-catching orange colour scheme.

These include:

- residential sites to the immediate south
- a wider southern visual catchment where the proposal will be visible from the street network, notably Georgina and Lambie Street.
- Views from the park to the east (although partly obscured) and to the north east (although quite distant).

There is a utility area opposite which includes an orion station and a water pump. This area also incorporates a small park / garden area.

Some landscaping is proposed to the south of the site, including a row of plagianthus regius, which will help to obscure the building over time if they establish on the bund, and some tulip trees on the corner, which will help to reduce the impact of the view from Georgina Street, although this will take some time.

Front Façade signage:

The main black and orange signage is to occupy the building “porch” projection. The sign is 66m², and set back 100m from the street. It has the benefit of helping to break the façade into three, which provides a bit of interest and it highlights the building projection. The remainder of the frontage is to be painted the corporate colour. This is a particularly eye-catching / distracting shade of orange.

Due to the distance involved, I do not consider the main sign (as in the lettering) to have an adverse impact on residents or the public area. The sign is large, but will be well setback.

The principle impact of the building is going to be through use of the orange frontage. This will be partly obscured by the frontage buildings, which will reduce the dominance of the expanse of the colour (by partly obscuring the building), and large areas of the front facade will not be visible from sensitive areas.

The proposal includes white lettering and symbols to be painted on the orange background. These signs do add some interest to the otherwise blank façade, without drawing too much attention. The acceptability of this additional signage is heavily dependent on its simple form (white painted letters and symbols on a plain background), but in this form they are appropriate and add some interest to what is a poor quality façade.

In making this assessment, I have not considered the orange colour as a whole because it extends well beyond areas of signage as identified on the plans. I consider the signage inscribed on the orange to be wholly appropriate and contribute positively by adding some interest to what is otherwise a monotonous and distracting building.

Other Building Signage

Other building signage is proposed on the east and west facades in the form of painted lettering on a grey or orange background. The east is more sensitive because it faces a park (and at the south end, some housing), whilst the west will be concealed by trees in the short term, but would otherwise be visible from within the local centre zone.

The east is to be painted grey. This façade is also set back from the boundary by about 40m.

The large black “Mega” sign is to be 3m high, with an area of 40m² and will be directly visible from the future garden area of no.64 Lambie Street, alongside the smaller Mitre 10 lettering. This sign is comprised of large, bold lettering which does not include much visual interest and, whilst recessive in colour, will be eye-catching due to its scale. This will particularly affect no.64, although will not be greatly visible from other houses on Lambie Street due to planting in the reserve (noting that relying on third party mitigation can be uncertain). I consider that this large sign would have a moderate impact residents of no.64. Due to its size and boldness, it would draw the eye and call attention to itself and the building. It would have a similar impact on no.53 Georgina St, although the angle would be a bit more oblique.

The signage would be visible on long views from Geogina Street, appearing in the centre of a person’s field of view as they walked north. Over time this may be mitigated by the tulip trees, as they will provide something more attractive to focus on. Whilst I consider the black sign would have a negative impact on this view, I consider it would be low in scale.

From Lambie Street, the building will not generally be visible above houses (from the street and once these are built).

It would also affect people walking past it on the adjacent walkway, but the impacts would be transitory.

I suggest that this sign should be reduced in scale (by about half) or removed, to reduce the impact on the identified residents. It should not be lit.

The west side is to be orange and will primarily be visible from the Commercial zone and the rural area beyond. Signage on this façade will be similar to the west.

The signage would be 150m from the rural zone, which I consider is far enough that it would not be intrusive. It would currently be hidden behind trees (although these are unlikely to stay forever). Some signage will be appropriate within the commercial area and as such it is not as sensitive an area as residential. As such I consider the impacts would be low on the commercial local zone.

Freestanding signage:

The applicant has revised the proposal to relocate the digital elements to the bottom of the sign. This would reduce their visibility from residential areas and public areas. The nearest dwelling is some 100m away to the west.

A digital sign is always more prominent than a static one due to the impact of transitions, which catch the eye; and contrast in the level of luminance against its background (irrespective of measures which may be in place to manage it). This is especially notable in low light conditions, when digital signs appear to be bright against a darker background. However, the proposed digital signs are small in scale, and not very high, which will mean they are not visible over long distances (and in particular that they will not be prominent from residential areas).

The signs will otherwise be quite prominent due to their size and the orange support structures. Whilst they will sit amongst the proposed frontage buildings, they will be quite a bit taller and there will be open views of them.

It is beneficial that they will sit within large landscape areas, and a frontage that includes some trees. This will help to integrate them into the street (because it will reduce the extent to which it will be seen against negative space). However, I do consider the orange structure will be obtrusive. It draws attention to the utilitarian structure, in particular the legs, and the way it “floats” above the street. I suggest the structure is painted black.

Conclusion

I have considered the impact of the proposed signage, and in my opinion:

- The building signage would mostly be appropriate in the context, given the scale of the building and separation.

- The exception to the above is the large “Mega” sign facing no.64 Lambies Street would call attention to itself and the monotonous built form to which it is attached, to the detriment of that property.
- The digital signage element of the freestanding sign is appropriate as it is to be fixed at a low height.
- The freestanding signage itself is of an appropriate scale, although large and with limited context. The location and scale of this signage is appropriate.
- Despite the above, the orange support structure for the freestanding signage is obtrusive.

Suggested changes

- The freestanding sign structure should be painted grey or black
- The East façade Mega sign should be reduced in size (to 20m²)