

HERITAGE ADVISOR'S REPORT/MEMO

**Proposal:** Construct a commercial building and signage  
**Address:** Lots 2 & 3, P5317675A  
79 High St, Maldon  
**Applicant:** Maldon & District Financial Services P/L  
**PA No:** 2009/204  
**To:** J. Streppel  
**Date:** 15 December 2009

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**General Overlay No.:**

**Individual Overlay No.:** H0153

**PROPOSAL:**

To construct a new single-storey commercial building on a currently vacant site for use by the Maldon Community Bank.

**BACKGROUND:**

I have been engaged in a number of discussions with Don Lewis, members of the bank and their designers over the past few months, and during that time the design for the proposed building has developed and subsequently modified.

The site has been vacant for many years and is in a very prominent location, so a great deal of thought was given to establishing design parameters for the building within the provisions of the Maldon Design Guidelines. The bank was keen to create a building that not only serviced the community but also employed best practice sustainable design principles. This was both applauded and encouraged, with the proviso that an appropriate recognition of the building's location in one of Australia's most important heritage streetscapes was required with respect to visible elements such as solar panels etc.

With respect to the external design of the proposed building, a quality design solution was encouraged, one that did not replicate Victorian style buildings but made its own contribution to the streetscape whilst deferring to the early buildings physically and visually.

**COMMENTS:**

As noted above, the design for the proposed building underwent some modification as it was developed and the submitted proposal addresses a number of the issues discussed. In general I believe that the proposal achieves many of the aims of both the design policy for infill buildings in Maldon and good design practice in Heritage streetscapes generally. The form has been kept simple in keeping with the small shops that previously occupied the site with a plain parapet to the street frontage. The building will identify itself as a "modern" insertion without overtly demanding the attention of the casual observer.

However, there are a couple of issues that perhaps require further attention before approval:

1. Much discussion was had regarding the north wall of the building. The small site required a 100% site coverage to provide viable facilities for the bank resulting in a fire-rated wall on the north boundary, and the exposed nature of the Fire Station's land immediately to the north results in the wall being relatively visible, particularly when travelling south down High

Street. It was agreed that weatherboard and corrugated steel were not appropriate for the building and that red brick (as indicated in the Maldon Design Guidelines) can be extremely harsh when new. The designers proposed concrete panels with an oxidizing additive that would create a weathered look relatively quickly and provide a distinct character to the building. Whilst supportive of the concept in general, I recommend that approval only be granted subject to a satisfactory existing example of the proposed finish being inspected and an opinion formed as to its effectiveness in this location. The alternative would be either red brick (refer comment above) or bagged brickwork. Blockwork is not considered appropriate for bagging as the component sizes do not relate to traditional bricks. It may however, be used in conjunction with cement render.

2: The verandah has developed from a simple metal sheet awning which was considered too abstract for the location. The proposed simple form with steel posts is appropriate for the location, although I have some reservations about the rusted steel finish. I am not convinced that a rust finish, which has been a recently fashionable finish, is appropriate in a streetscape that, despite some lack of maintenance, has featured predominately painted or "dressed" finishes over the years. Similarly, the use of corrugated steel is the single most dominant feature of Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century verandahs and there is a strong argument that it should be employed. It could be utilized with stand-off cleats to support the purlins or similar features to provide a distinctive element. That said, I would be prepared to view more specific details for the verandah and its details before finalising my view, as the designers have seriously attempted to "re-interpret" the traditional verandah as they were encouraged to do.

3. The long horizontal window on the south elevation is an uncompromising "modern" element and, whilst only viewed down the right-of-way, I believe that an alternative could be explored. For example, there appears sufficient height to create a series of square or vertically-rectangular windows along the elevation with the same total glazed area.

The other design elements, rooflight, solar panels etc. are considered to be appropriately detailed or located. Similarly, whilst I suggest that the sliding entry doors be framed to avoid an 'invisible' contemporary effect, the use of the recessed entry lobby to accommodate the ATM is an excellent solution.

With respect to the signage and, notwithstanding that as drawn it appears relatively discrete and noting the "corporate identity" requirements of the Bendigo Bank, it would be desirable if the "Maldon & District Community Bank Branch" sign on the parapet be designed in uppercase Tonic or similar appropriate typeface, in accordance with the signage provisions in the Maldon Design Guidelines. The Bendigo Bank sign to the right of the main frontage is sufficiently small in size to be acceptable.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the proposal be approved, but with conditions requiring:

1. Confirmation of the finish to the north wall as noted above.
2. Review of the verandah finish to approval.
3. Modifications to the south strip windows as noted above to approval
4. Sliding entry doors be framed.

**IAN COLEMAN**  
Heritage Adviser