



Planning Assessment Report

Development Application DA 79-4-2005

Taronga Zoo – Upper Entry and Car Park

1 SUMMARY

This report is an assessment of the proposed development the subject of Development Application number DA 79-4-2005.

The application seeks consent for the redevelopment of the Upper Entry of Taronga Zoo, including construction of a three-level parking structure and conservation of upper entrance building and tram shed.

The DA 79-4-2005 is submitted under the provisions of State Environmental Planning Policy No. 56 – Sydney Harbour Foreshores and Tributaries (SEPP 56). The Minister for Planning is consent authority under Clause 10 of SEPP 56.

It is recommended that the development application be determined by the Minister subject to conditions.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site Context

The DA 79-4-2005 was lodged with the Department on 8 April 2005 in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (the Act) as amended (prior to 1 August 2005).

The development site is located at Taronga Zoo, Mosman in the Mosman Local Government Area. The DA relates to Lot 22 of DP 843294. Taronga Zoo is located approximately 3.5 km by ferry north east of Circular Quay. The Zoo occupies a site of 28 hectares on the Bradleys Head Peninsula and maintains, together with the adjoining Sydney Harbour National Park, a natural foreshore setting amongst a predominantly developed urban landscape.

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development seeks consent for the redevelopment of the inner plaza, outer plaza and car park of the Zoo's Upper Entry and comprises the following works:

Inner plaza

- Conservation and maintenance of the heritage listed upper Entrance Building, including the removal of unsympathetic/instructive elements;
- Conservation and maintenance of the Northern Perimeter Wall;
- Demolition of the existing café, information booth, koala encounters exhibit, Tasmanian devil enclosure, former koala house, former reptile house, ashlar block wall and temporary shop in front of the Sky Safari exit;

- Construction of a new café with indoor and outdoor seating and a shop;
- Construction of a circulation Node, accessed via walkways that comply with Australian Standards;
- New and realigned circulation paths; and
- Landscaping of the Inner Plaza, including tree retention and removal.

Outer Plaza

- A forecourt to the heritage Entrance Building;
- Conservation and maintenance of the Tram Shelter and occupation by offices for the Zoo Friends;
- A total of 905 car parking spaces located within:
 - A three level car parking structure accommodating 675 cars (including 14 access parking spaces) accessed from Bradleys Head Road,
 - A landscaped overflow parking area accommodating 177 cars (including 5 access parking spaces),
 - At grade staff parking for 53 cars, located between the car parking structure and landscaped berm to Whiting Beach Road;
- Parking for 12 coaches, accessed from Whiting Beach Road;
- A new STA bus drop-off and turn around on the western side of Bradley's Head Road (including a waiting canopy and dedicated SRA toilet);
- Landscaping of the Outer Plaza, including tree retention and removal, and clear pedestrian circulation paths; and
- New business identification signage, at the corner of Bradley's Head and Whiting Beach Roads (the existing signage will be relocated within the Zoo).

4 STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

4.1 *Statement of permissibility*

Taronga Zoo is zoned 5(a) Community Uses (Zoological Gardens) under the Mosman LEP. The site is also listed in Schedule 1 in State Environmental Planning Policy No. 56 as a Site of State or Regional Significance. The proposed development is permissible with consent pursuant to SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment) and the Mosman LEP.

The environmental planning instruments, draft environmental planning instruments, development control plans, and regulations applicable to the land to which the development application DA 79-4-2005 relate are as follows:

- *State Environmental Planning Policy - Sydney Harbour Foreshores and Tributaries (SEPP 56);*
- *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy 11 – Traffic Generating Developments*
- *Sydney Harbour Foreshores and Waterways Area DCP*

- *Mosman Local Environmental Plan* (Mosman LEP) 1998;

4.2 Instrument of consent and other relevant planning instruments

SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005 has superseded SEPP56, however Clause 11 (2) of the SREP provides transitional arrangements that maintain the applicability of SEPP56, if the DA is lodged but not determined prior to the gazettal of the SREP, as if the SREP has been exhibited but not made.

Under Schedule 1 of SEPP 56, Taronga Zoo is listed as State Significant. Clause 10 of SEPP 56 provides that the Minister is consent authority for Schedule 1 sites. In accordance with clause 11 of SEPP 56, development at Taronga Zoo cannot be determined unless there is a Master Plan for the site.

A Master Plan for Taronga Zoo has been prepared and adopted in 2002 by the Minister for Planning, pursuant to Clause 21 (3) of SEPP 56 and comprises the following suite of documents:

- Zoo 2000 'The View to the Future' – December 1999;
- Taronga Zoo Master Plan Urban Design Principles and Visual Analysis (UDAS Guidelines) – May 2001; and
- Taronga Zoo Conservation Strategy – July 2002.

The subject site is Crown Land and the development application is submitted on behalf of the Crown, pursuant to Part 5A of the Act as amended (prior to 1 August 2005).

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 Public consultation

The application was notified and exhibited, in accordance with the Regulations including:

Notifications – landowners/occupiers	85 adjoining owners/occupiers were notified by letter dated 28 April 2005
Newspaper advertisements	Advertised in Mosman Daily on 5 May 2005
Exhibition dates	Start: 6 May 2005 End: 7 June 2005
Exhibition venues	▪ DIPNR, Planning Information Centre, Ground Floor, Henry Deane Building, 20 Lee Street, Sydney ▪ Mosman Council, Civic Centre, Mosman Square, Mosman

Sixty-seven (67) public submissions were received regarding the application. The submissions raised the following issues:

Above ground car park

Visual

- Structure will be visible from road and harbour;

- Impact on Bradleys Head Road conservation/heritage area;
- Not in keeping with heritage character of zoo entrance and architecture in vicinity and with adjoining Ashton Park;
- Out of character with surrounding bushland existing residential area;
- Number of parking levels in the station and visual impact are misrepresented;
- Car park structure (if there is to be one) should be underground.

Public transport

- Does not encourage public transport and needs to consider how public transport can be better utilised – by staff as well;
- Bus congestion will impact on commuters.

Parking

- Already park in streets to avoid paying fee;
- Car park will not address existing parking and traffic issues;
- Unnecessarily based on current usage patterns of existing car park;
- There is no needs-based argument to support building of car park station let alone one of the scale proposed;
- Inadequate manoeuvring for busses;
- Not adequate disabled parking inadequate design dimensions.

Traffic

- Already existing traffic problems and will increase traffic and parking problems;
- Traffic congestion will impact on local traffic and Military Road corridor;
- Increase chance of traffic accidents;
- Large tourist coaches should not be routed down Whiting Beach Road and quiet residential streets;

Noise, light, air pollution

- Impact at night from illumination and car headlights on upper deck;
- Noise impact
- Air pollution arising from cars arriving and departing at concentrated times
- Object to use of car park to 2 am;

General

- Will degrade tourist icon and reduce cultural experience;
- Turning Zoo into convention and entertainment area, commercial venture, Car park will encourage further development of site;
- Existing car park is sensitively landscaped and is used as an open space and recreation are when not occupied by cars during the week;
- Will wreck ambience of area;
- Will result in tree removal and runoff;
- Statistical data and projections on use are questionable;
- Car park will encourage hooliganism, vandalism and safety issues;

- New signage on Bradleys head Road/ Whiting Beach Road is inappropriate
- Inadequate consultation with local residents and general community
- Disruption to residential amenity during construction phase is unacceptable

There was a letter of support of the development proposal from the Association of Zoo Friends (NSW inc).

5.2 Referrals

5.2.1 Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW

The application was referred to the RTA on 28 April 2005 as the approval authority for the proposed roadworks off Bradleys Head Road pursuant to Section 138(2) of the Roads Act, 1993. The application was also referred to the RTA pursuant to the requirements of State Environmental Planning Policy 11.

The Sydney Regional Development Advisory Committee considered the application at its meeting on 25 May 2005 and advised the following:

The RTA would grant its concurrence under Section 138(2) of the Roads Act subject to the Department's approval and nominated conditions being incorporated in the Department's conditions of development consent.

5.2.2 Council

The application was referred to the Mosman Council on 28 April 2005 in accordance with Clause 12 of SEPP 56. Council responded on 8 June 2005, and advised the following:

Council considers the proposed works within the enclosed walls of the Zoo as reasonable and in keeping with the objectives of the Zoo Master Plan; however, the Council is concerned about the impacts of the proposed changes to car and bus parking and handling on the site are unsatisfactory and, in the case of the proposed multi-level car parking structure, should be deleted from any approval granted in respect of this application.

Council requested that particular note of the following:

- absence of intersection analysis for key access roads and Bradleys Head Road to assess traffic impacts
- absence of a draft Construction Traffic Management Plan for zoo visitors and other traffic during construction.
- adverse consequences on existing established trees and landscaped setting of the Zoo, especially in bus bay area and car parks
- size and adverse consequences of the parking structure on the heritage significance of the Zoo and the Bradleys Head Road Conservation Area
- Amenity impacts of car park structure due to proposed hours of use
- apparent acceptance of private vehicles as the primary means of access to the site
- impact of the proposal on on-street parking, due to search for free parking spaces
- bus area design has not considered 'bendy' buses
- engineering issues – stormwater runoff, car parking and bus parking design
- replacement of sculpture, other proposed signage

5.2.3 Design Review Panel

The application was referred to the Sydney Harbour Design Review panel (SHDRP) in conjunction with DA 80-4-2005 (proposed works to lower). The SHDRP considered the application on 6 May 2005 and raised the following concerns:

- A new and multi-deck car park structure sends the wrong signal in an age when public transport and traffic management solutions should take precedent.
- The structure is over-designed and will encourage, not discourage car use and added traffic in the area.
- The structure has been placed almost totally above the ground, as was stated, for cost reasons.
- The Panel acknowledged that public expenditure decisions must meet financial feasibility tests yet it is concerned that this seems to have been the primary driving factor.
- No information was supplied re visibility of the structural car park from the harbour
- The Panel had major concerns about the Outer Plaza.
- It is felt that the proposals organisation is based on a flawed concept, with the overflow parking, closest to the Zoo, remaining empty for the majority of the time. The panel did not accept that this parking area could be maintained with a genuine 'landscaped' character.
- Major concern that the whole Outer Plaza area is somewhat fragmented – there is an uncomfortable and unresolved relationship between built structure and natural forms, the formal landscape at the entry and the rather narrow band of informal landscape between it and the car park.
- The position of the Tram Shed, a minor heritage item, seems to be compromising the entrance to the Main Zoo building, a major heritage item.
- The car parking seems to be dictating the end solution at the expense of overall landscape quality.
- The Panel also expressed concern at the long blank wall facing the overflow car park.

5.2.4 Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)

The application was referred to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) on 14 June 2005. The DEC advised the following:

- Concerned that the DEC was not consulted by applicant during project formulation.
- Concerned at the potential impacts of stormwater runoff into the national park and proposed habitat restoration area. Proposal does not adequately address these issues, particularly with respect to the impacts of phosphorous and erosion.
- Recommend that further assessment of stormwater runoff be undertaken.
- Applicant should identify measures to manage gross pollutants.
- Seeks confirmation that works do not encroach on national park.

5.2.5 Heritage Council of NSW

The application was referred to the Heritage Council of NSW on 28 April 2005 and a written response dated 3 June, 2005 has been received.

While the property is identified as a heritage item of national significance under the Section 170 register of the Zoological Parks Board, and the upper entrance gate listed as a heritage item of state significance under Clause 34 of the Mosman Local Environmental Plan, it is not listed on the State Heritage Register, the Heritage Office is not the consent authority and as such, does not have a statutory role in the planning process. However, the letter stated that the application for works is generally supported with the exception of the multi-level car park.

5.3 Internal consultations

No consultation has been undertaken with regional planning bodies with regard to the application.

6 CONSIDERATION

6.1 The Environmental Planning & Assessment Act

6.1.1 Section 79C

The application and the likely impacts of the proposed development have been considered in accordance with Section 79C of the Act. Significant issues are discussed below in Section 6.2.

The subject site is considered suitable for the proposed development. Submissions have been considered and issues raised in the assessment are discussed in Section 6.2.

On balance, the proposed development is considered to be in the public interest.

6.2 Issues

6.2.1 Three level car park structure – visual and amenity impacts

Issue: The proposed multi-storey car park structure will accommodate 675 cars over three levels. The structure is approximately 164m long and 33m wide, covering an area of 5412m². The minimum setback to the boundary adjoining Whiting Beach Road is 18m.

Concerns raised included the appearance of bulk and scale of this structure and the visual impact on surrounding streets, other public places, and private residences. Vegetation removal, encouragement of private car use, necessity, hours of use and security were also raised.

Raised by: Department of Planning, Mosman Council, NSW Heritage Office, Sydney Harbour Design Review Panel, Resident submissions

Consideration: The multi storey car park has been designed to provide sufficient numbers of on-site parking spaces for the projected increase (to year 2013) in visitors to the zoo, which will see a corresponding increase of visitors arriving by private vehicle. It is designed to reduce the need to park in surrounding streets when the car park is full, which according

to the applicant's submission, should only occur a maximum 10 days per year.

The car park has been designed to minimise excavation by working with the local topography, including largely retaining the sandstone plateau formation between this car park structure and the overflow parking. This also results in less construction noise, and will rely on natural ventilation rather than mechanical ventilation to reduce energy usage and noise pollution. Stormwater collection and storage is to be built into this structure, which will be reused on site to address water conservation.

To address concerns raised about the appearance of the structure, especially the long unrelieved northern elevation, two sections are to be cut out of the northern elevation, 3 car spaces wide and 4m in depth, increasing the articulation. The resultant area will be required to be planted with canopy trees to soften the built form. The timber poles proposed to be attached to the car park structure will be varied in height and spacing to add design interest, as demonstrated by the applicant in revised plans. Conditions are also recommended for additional planting around the structure including the eastern and western side, as seen from Bradleys Head Road and Little Ashton Park respectively.

The car park structure will not be seen from the Harbour, a concern raised by SHDRP and residents.

It is considered that concerns about night use are justified and as a result, conditions are recommended to restrict hours of use, and also which parts can be used after certain hours to protect residential amenity. The plans were amended during the course of the assessment to include baffles on the northern elevation to reduce light spill from headlights.

To address security concerns, a condition is recommended for the multi storey car park to be properly secured when closed so as to prevent entry by unauthorised persons.

Resolution: To address the issues raised above, the following conditions have been included:

Condition B1 requires two proposed cut-out sections on the northern elevation of the car park, with Condition B2 requiring a revised landscaping plan for additional screen planting.

Hours of use are restricted by Condition E3, including prohibiting the use of the top level of the carpark for functions or activities held at the Zoo which commence after, or continue after the standard Zoo closing times.

Condition E4 requires the car park is to be properly secured when closed to address safety and security.

6.2.2 Heritage Impact

Issue: Concerns were raised that the multi storey car park will degrade the heritage significance of the front entrance building and other heritage

items in the vicinity of the site, as well as the location of the tram shed building.

Raised by: Department of Planning, NSW Heritage Office, Resident concerns, Mosman Council

Consideration: The multi-level car park is setback over 80m from the heritage listed upper entrance building, with the overflow parking area, which is landscaped with trees and shrubs, to provide spatial and visual separation between the two structures.

Additional planting will be required around the multi-level carpark to provide for improved screening of this structure, discussed previously.

As a result of the measures discussed previously to reduce the visual impact of the car park structure, it is also considered that the impact on heritage items of Sydney Harbour National Park (Ashton Park), Bradleys Head Road (street trees), Prince Albert Street, house at 9 Whiting Beach Road will be satisfactory as a result.

The location of the existing tram shed will not be changed. It is to be modified and reused primarily by Zoo Friends as offices, and therefore this concern is not considered to be relevant.

No issues have been raised with regard to the heritage impact of the inner plaza proposal, however conditions have been provided by the Heritage Council for works to heritage buildings and to address any archaeological deposits or relics that may be uncovered during construction.

Resolution: Conditions B38, B39 and B40 were provided by the NSW Heritage Office which address providing an archival record, works to the Upper Entrance Building and archaeological remains.

Condition B37 requires a Heritage Superintendent to oversee the works associated with heritage components of the site.

6.2.3 Traffic Impacts

Issue: Concerns were raised regarding the encouragement of private vehicle use by the provision of additional parking and subsequent increase in traffic in streets and intersections leading to the zoo. In addition, that the increased parking spaces will not relieve parking on public streets due to avoidance of paying the parking fee.

Concerns were also raised relating to the design and function of the bus bays, and use of Whiting Beach Road by coaches.

Raised by: Mosman Council, Resident Submissions

Consideration: Based on the traffic report provided with the application, private vehicle use is not projected to increase as a share of total visitors to the zoo. The numbers of spaces provided are based on current parking numbers plus projected overall visitor increases to year 2013.

Concerns were raised that people would still look for free on-street parking. This is acknowledged as likely to continue, but it does reduce the need for parking on the streets due to the car park being full.

Concerns were raised about possible problems with bus manoeuvring and congestion in the bus bay areas, and use of Whiting Beach Road by coaches. No significant issues were raised by the RTA with regard to the development, however conditions have been provided to ensure it meets required design standards. It is considered standard bus sizes are appropriate, as 'bendy' buses do not need to be used.

There will be no pedestrian crossing provided on Bradleys Head Road due to safety. There is a bus stop closer to the intersection of Whiting Beach Road to cater for non-zoo bus users for the loss of the STA bus stop due to the removal of the internal bus bay and bus stop.

Disabled parking is adequate, and is addressed by Australian Standards and is addressed by conditions.

Resolution: The conditions provided by the RTA have been incorporated into the consent. These include:

B11 – Carpark signage

B15 – Bus/coach drop off and pick up

B17 – Car park and service vehicle layout

B18 – Coach parking layout

Condition AN17 has also been included to promote public transport use.

Disabled parking is addressed by condition B18 and AN19.

Standard conditions have also been included, such as B12 for Traffic control devices.

6.2.4 Landscaping

Issue: Concerns were raised regarding tree and other vegetation removal to accommodate the new parking areas, and the adequacy of proposed new planting, including in the vicinity of the bus bay/drop off area.

Raised by: Department of Planning, Mosman Council, Resident submissions

Consideration: Additional planting is required on site to screen the multi-storey car park, and to maintain the landscape character of the site, as discussed previously.

The current car park configuration has 1.2 hectares of hard surface, whereas the proposed car parking will have 0.9 hectares of hard surface. Approximately 64 trees are proposed to be removed, however approximately 90 will be retained, along with additional planting including 230 trees.

The overflow parking has a permeable grassed surface, reducing the appearance of hard surfacing, and also allows for stormwater collection for reuse on site, which does not happen at present.

It is considered that there are no significant issues relating to other vegetation on the site to accommodate parking. The regenerated heath was discussed in the applicant's submission, where it was found to have been regenerated within the last 40 years and is not an important habitat area.

To address tree removal in the bus bay/drop off area, a condition is recommended for an Arborist to address the viability of transplanting the two fig trees to be removed to the pedestrian island, otherwise for new trees to be planted instead and the fig trees shall be made available at no cost to the public. This will help to improve the landscape character of this section of the site.

Resolution: Condition B2 is recommended to be included for a revised landscaping plan for additional planting to screen the multi storey car park structure, and Condition B3 is recommended for an arborist is to provide a report on the feasibility of transplanting the two fig species nominated for removal in the bus bay area, or replacement planting.

6.2.5 Construction phase

Issue: Concerns were raised about the management of traffic during the construction phase, as well as noise.

Raised by: Mosman Council, Resident submissions

Consideration: Concerns were raised regarding the disruption of residential amenity during construction.

To address this issue, management plans are recommended to be conditioned to address construction traffic, as well as for managing zoo visitor and staff parking and buses during the construction phase.

Conditions are also recommended to be included to limit construction hours to address some of the neighbour concerns.

Resolution: Conditions B30, B31, B32 and B33 are recommended for a Construction Management Plan, Traffic and Pedestrian Plan, Noise and Vibration Plan and Construction Waste Management Plan respectfully to address above issues raised.

Condition C11 is recommended to state the hours of construction, which are standard construction hours required by Mosman Council.

6.2.6 Stormwater and other pollution

Issue: Concerns about stormwater runoff has not been properly addressed, in particular into the National Park, as well as other gross pollutant

Raised by: Department of Environment and Conservation, Mosman Council

Consideration: It is considered that this issue can be addressed by conditions.

Resolution: Condition B10 is recommended to be included for stormwater run-off from the subject site onto Bradleys Head Road, as a result of the proposed development is not to exceed the existing level of run off from the site.

Condition B9 is recommended to be included to address sediment and erosion control during construction.

Condition B41 is recommended to be added to state that no works are to encroach into the National Park without development consent to address DEC concerns.

6.2.7 Signage

- Issue:* Concerns were raised that the sandstone sculpture should not be removed, and that the proposed identification signage on Bradleys Head Road is inappropriate.
- Raised by:* Mosman Council, Resident submissions
- Consideration:* The application proposes to replace the sandstone platypus sculpture at the front of the site with a contemporary vertical sign. The details of the sign, including dimensions, materials and illumination were submitted during the writing of the report and not notified. Due to the timing of the submission and as it was not included in the notification process, the sign will not be considered with this application, and will require a separate application.
- Resolution:* Condition B4 is recommended to be added to state that the proposed business identification sign proposed for the north-eastern corner of the site is not approved, and will require a separate Development Application.

7 CONCLUSION

The Minister for Planning is the consent authority for sites listed under Schedule 1 of SEPP 56.

The application has been considered with regard to the matters raised in section 79C of the Act and the provisions of Part 5A of the Act (prior to 1 August 2005).

The application has been notified in accordance with the Regulations and the matters contained in the submissions received have been considered.

On balance, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable and should be determined by the Minister for consent.

8 CONSULTATION WITH THE APPLICANT – DRAFT CONDITIONS

The applicant was asked to comment on the draft conditions of consent on 26 September 2006. The applicant responded on 27 September 2006 generally agreeing to the conditions, except for Condition C12 for hours of rock breaking work. The condition was modified with an increase of one hour permitted for work on Mondays to Saturdays, to which the applicant agreed on 28 September 2006.

9 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister, pursuant to section 80 (1) and 80A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (as amended), clause 10 of SEPP 56 and clause 11 of SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005:

- (A) grant **consent** to the application subject to conditions (Tagged “A”), and
- (B) authorise the Department to carry out post-determination notification.

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