

4 February 2009

VALAD Property Group  
Level 9, 1 Chifley Square  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: Mr Denis Ghersinich - Project Manager



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Dear Mr. Ghersinich,

RE: Ikea Tempe Landscaping Design Proposals  
Response to Marrickville Council Comments on the Part 3a Major Project Submission

We write this letter to provide a response to Council's comments relating to the landscape aspects of the proposed Ikea development at Tempe, as described in the letter dated 9 October 2008 from Ken Hawke, Council's Director of Development and Environment Services.

We note that we have provided a Landscape Design Report as part of the lodged application, and discussed in that document many of the design issues raised. We will therefore try to briefly expand upon the design report to highlight how we can accommodate Council's suggestions and concerns. We will also note where we feel the design concerns expressed are in our opinion unfounded, or at least on balance the best design solution has been sought.

We provide response to issues raised in Item 5.3 of Council's letter relating to:

- Prince Highway Street Trees and Landscaping Character;
- Carpark scale and diversity of tree species
- Insufficient Outdoor Landscaped Usable Spaces
- Changing proposed site Fig tree relocation to be group of new native canopy trees;
- Future Public Domain and Landscaping Strategy for precinct.

With regard to Street Trees along the Highway, our report highlights the substantial limitations on street trees given the flight path height contours that restrict the height of trees. We note that we are keen to add more trees to satisfy with Council's suggestion. The plans have been adjusted to include 16 indigenous canopy trees along the street, and will select the species at the detailed design stage.

However, we also note that we feel there are additional considerations relating to the specific number and locations we have suggested, and welcome a further opportunity to discuss our reasoning with Council. This includes protection of the panoramic views at this location; sightlines to the heritage building; and creating an appropriate civic response that relates to the large scale and specific international iconic identity of the development.

Council's concerns as to the character of the understorey planting and the gabion walls is noted and we have suggestions to respond to their comments. Their concern as to the 'modern' and structural style of landscape blade wall elements was considered to be visually harsh. We suggest that providing climbing plants will 'green' these elements, and in this way we believe we can substantially soften the presence of these elements, whilst retaining our general design intent.

With regard to the carpark landscaping, we feel that we can largely address Council's concerns in terms of providing more modulation and variation to the character of trees, with different species to create precincts. The number and extent of trees planted across the area, is significant, with 95 trees indicated on the submitted plans. We disagree with some of Council's comments with regard to tree planting detailing over the required capping of the waste fill below the area.

The project engineer Consultants have considered the potential to include porous pavements near to trees, and excluded this from consideration. Council was also keen for us to consider clumping of trees into groups, particularly near the main pedestrian entry. The premise was to increase the amenity for parked cars through providing shade. Again, the detailing of a massed soil zone with larger tall canopy trees is inconsistent with engineering advice we have received.

In response to Council's request for additional planting near the main pedestrian entry to the building, we note we have included approximately 12 additional trees in the broad planters just adjacent and above the 'capped' carpark area. We believe this will go a long way to satisfying Council's request for additional trees in this area

In response to Council's request for more useable outdoor landscaped areas, we note this was specifically raised when we met with Council's Landscape Architects as being preference for a seating zone close to the roadside. We highlighted the inconsistency of this with CPTED principles, given it's remote location from other active areas of the site. The discouragement of roadside gatherings was seen by us as being important. We do not agree specifically with that proposal. More generally, we believe that the various outdoor seating areas and breakout spaces around the site are suitable and considered in terms of responding to actual functionality and amenity of users of the site. These areas include adjacent the Ateco and Main Buildings, as well as to the entry undercroft and pickup / drop-off areas, and the bus waiting area.

With regard to the proposed relocation of the mature Fig tree, discussions with Council have highlighted their view that despite the value of this as a reference to the site heritage, the cost of the works were considered to not reflect the potential community benefit. Council believed the open space and seating area where the Fig tree was proposed to be located could have equal or even improved amenity through providing a group of native Canopy trees. This in part stems from the problem of a relocated tree needing to have access restricted around the base so as to protect roots from damage. Hence the shading benefit is somewhat restricted compared to the shading benefit of new trees. Given the budget provision made by the project to the Fig tree relocation, and the equal benefit that Council considered new tree planting could provide, Council asked that consideration be given to passing along saving to a contribution to Council. It is understood that this proposal has been accepted by the project, and therefore new native trees (100 litre container size at installation) will be proposed in this area in lieu of the Fig tree. We will liaise with Council to gain their further views on final design of this area to ensure the trees provide suitable amenity for this large open space area of the site.

With regard to providing a Landscape Strategy for the open space and streetscapes near to the site, we note the cost of such consultancy could be provided by the developer out of their Section 94 Contributions to the Council. This would appear to be an appropriate use of these funds. On this basis we would be willing to assist Council with preparation of the Landscape Strategy.

We trust the above comments, and the accompanying amended Site Image Landscape Plan (Drawing Number 101, issue G) suitably address the suggestions and comments of Council. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned to discuss any aspect of the above, or to seek further clarification of information to assist assessment of the proposals.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Shepherd', followed by a period.

Ross Shepherd BLArch AAILA Registered Landscape Architect  
Director – Site Image Pty Ltd (Landscape Architects)