

Part 3A Project Outline and Preliminary Environmental Assessment

Novotel Darling Harbour Hotel Extension and Refurbishment

Submitted to
Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority
On Behalf of Accor Asia Pacific

May 2007 ■ 07108

JBA Urban Planning Consultants Pty Ltd operates under a Quality Management System. This report has been prepared and reviewed in accordance with that system. If the report is not signed below, it is a preliminary draft.

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A	Indicative Architectural Plans
	<i>Architectus</i>
	<i>Including Drawing No:</i>
	<i>SK 00-10</i>
	<i>SK 00-11</i>
	<i>SK 02-03</i>
	<i>SK 03-03</i>
	<i>SK 00-00B</i>

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to seek the opinion of the Minister for Planning as to whether the proposed expansion to Novotel Darling Harbour is a development of the kind described in Schedule 2 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 and therefore, is a 'major project' to be determined under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act).

It is requested that:

- The Minister form the opinion that the proposed expansion is a major project under Part 3A;
- The Director-General prepare and issue the Environmental Assessment Requirements; and
- The Director-General consider delegating the assessment of the Environmental Assessment to Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA).

The proposed development involves:

- Extensions to the upper floors of the existing 'ziggurat' hotel building to accommodate 136 additional rooms with no increase in building height;
- Development of a new 3 storey building to the south adjoining the existing hotel building to accommodate 96 additional rooms;
- Increasing the GFA to approximately 40,464m²;
- Internal alterations to the existing hotel building to improve guest reception management;
- Alterations to the external building façade including a new plaza entrance at Murray Street;
- Reconfiguration of existing vehicle entrances and new port cochere; and
- Enhancing the existing through site link to Darling Harbour.

This report is submitted to SHFA on behalf of the applicant Accor Asia Pacific. JBA Urban Planning Consultants Pty Ltd has prepared this report based on plans and information prepared for Accor Asia Pacific by Architectus.

It describes the site and the proposed development, and includes a preliminary scoping assessment of the environmental planning issues associated with the proposed development.

1.1 Background

On 17th December 2003 SHFA issued development consent to DA 446-09-03 for alterations and additions to the existing hotel building (Novotel) to provide additional office floor space and recreational facilities. This approved development was proposed at the southern end of the existing hotel building over the existing courtyard. The approved commercial development has yet to be constructed.

Further to this, in July 2006 a Concept Plan/Project Application under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act was lodged with SHFA. This application incorporated a modification to reduce the approved commercial floor space (approved in DA 446-09-03) and extend the height of the commercial envelope to accommodate an additional 68 hotel rooms. This application is currently under assessment by SHFA. This lodged application is to be officially withdrawn once this new application (discussed below) is lodged.

2.0 Site Analysis

2.1 Site Location and Context

The existing Novotel building is located at 100 Murray Street and forms part of the western edge of Darling Harbour. The site includes a substantial proportion of the block bounded by Murray Street and Darling Drive. A location plan and aerial photograph of the site are shown in **Figures 1 and 2**.



Figure 1 – Locality Plan



 The Site

Figure 2 – Aerial Photograph

2.2 Site Description

The site is legally described as Lot 300 DP 836419 and has an area of 1.106 hectares. A number of smaller lots, with strata title, are also contained within Lot 300 and are included as part of the site. The site is leased by Accor Asia Pacific from the SHFA.

The site has a street frontage to Murray Street (approx 141m). The site also has a street frontage to Darling Drive, however the existing building sits a number of levels above this street and is separated from it by the existing Monorail and Lightrail tracks.

The existing topography of the site is such that the site steps down 5 levels from the Murray Street frontage to Darling Drive.

2.3 Existing Development

The existing development onsite comprises the Novotel Darling Harbour Hotel and a lower level commercial tenancy and car park.

The existing Novotel building consists of 10 levels of accommodation and comprises 525 guest rooms, reception area and a bar and restaurant. The hotel building has been designed in a 'ziggurat' form, stepping down at various level intervals at both the southern and northern ends of the building (as shown in **Figure 3**). The existing Novotel Darling Harbour building comprises approximately 31,020m² of GFA.

To the south of the building, accessed from Level 1, is a courtyard area containing a swimming pool and tennis court available to hotel guests.



Figure 3 – Existing Novotel 'ziggurat' building

The existing hotel building and southern courtyard is located above a commercial tenancy and 5 levels of car parking which are accessed from Murray Street (refer to **Figures 3** and **5**). The majority of this car parking is paid public car parking with the exception of the ground level spaces which are currently leased by Accor Asia Pacific for hotel guests.

2.4 Surrounding Development

Surrounding the site is a mix of land uses including residential, commercial, retail and tourism.

To the north

Adjoining the site to the north is a hotel building of similar height known as the Hotel Ibis Darling Harbour. This building is separated from the site by an existing public walkway that provides access to the Harbourside Shopping Centre.

To the south

To the immediate south of the site is an existing public walkway and the Western Distributor (refer to **Figure 4**). Across the Western Distributor to the south west is a 14 storey residential apartment building known as the Goldsbrough apartments.



Figure 4 – Western Distributor and Goldsbrough apartments

To the east

To the immediate east the site is adjoined by an existing light railtrack/station and Monorail track/station (refer to **Figure 5**). Adjoining the railway line to the east is Darling Drive. Across Darling Drive is the Harbourside Shopping Centre (also shown in **Figure 5**) and the Darling Harbour promenade.



Figure 5 – Lightrail, monorail, Darling Drive and Harbourside Shopping Centre to the east of the site

To the west

To the immediate west of the site, fronting Murray Street are a number of residential flat buildings varying from 8-11 storeys with ground floor retail (refer to **Figure 6**). Only one of these buildings (on the Bunn Street corner) has existing views, past the existing Novotel building to the Sydney CBD from a limited number of upper level apartments.



Figure 6 – Residential apartment buildings to the west of the Novotel on Murray Street

3.0 Description of Development Proposal

The proposed expansion of the Novotel Darling Harbour involves the following:

- Extensions to the upper floors of the existing 'ziggurat' hotel building to accommodate 136 additional rooms with no increase in building height;
- Development of a new 3 storey building to the south adjoining the existing hotel building to accommodate 96 additional rooms;
- Increasing the GFA to approximately 40,464m²;
- Internal alterations to the existing hotel building to improve guest reception management;
- Alterations to the external building façade including a new plaza entrance at Murray Street;
- Reconfiguration of existing vehicle entrances and new port cochere; and
- Enhancing the existing through site link to Darling Harbour.

Indicative Architectural Plans of the proposed development are included at **Appendix A**. The Indicative Architectural Plans illustrate the key aspects of the development proposal and are submitted to assist SHFA in issuing the Director General's requirements for the Environmental Assessment. The detailed design remains subject to further resolution as part of the preparation of the Environmental Assessment.

3.1 Development Principles

The planning and design principles for the development of the site are as follows:

- Provide a signature or 'flag-ship' development amongst Novotel's existing regional and international hotels;
- Provide additional hotel accommodation to service Sydney's needs as an international and regional tourist destination;
- Improve the Novotel's compatibility with adjoining properties and Darling Harbour;
- Reactivate the existing Murray Street frontage including:
 - Improve Novotel's presence and amenity in the streetscape;
 - Improve the accessibility and legibility of the main pedestrian entrance to Novotel from Murray Street;
 - Improve vehicular accessibility to the entrance of the hotel;
- Improve pedestrian through site linkages to Darling Harbour from Murray Street;
- Minimise the impact on the development of the views of Murray Street residents; and
- Minimise disturbance during construction.

3.2 Building Envelope

The building envelope of the existing hotel will be extended as follows:

- Extension or 'squaring off' of the existing stepped northern and southern building ends (Level 6 upwards); and
- New northern envelope extension over the existing car park/tennis court (Level G-3).



Figure 7- Proposed building envelope extension

Minor setback reductions are proposed to the Murray Street frontage.

The proposal adds 9,444m² of GFA to the existing hotel building. The proposed total GFA for the hotel building is 40,464m² which provides a 3.6:1 floor space ratio for the site.

3.3 Internal reconfiguration works

In addition to the increase in room numbers to the existing building, the proposal also includes a number of internal modifications which do not contribute to the total additional GFA for the hotel. These works include:

- Expansion of the existing Lower Lobby and the relocation of the Reception Counter to the ground floor;
- Refurbishment and expansion of the existing restaurant – to potentially extend to include the existing bar and lobby lounge area; and
- Extension and refurbishment of the existing (Level 1 north) function rooms – including the addition of an external glazed awning/walkway.

3.4 Streetscape and access improvements

The Murray Street entrance to the Novotel will be redeveloped to improve the streetscape environment and amenity. The key alterations include:

- New glazed plaza entrance at Ground Level; and
- Incorporation of facade treatment and architectural features to emphasise the entrance point.

In addition to this the proposed development includes an embellishment of the existing pedestrian site link from Murray Street to the Monorail Station, Harbourside Shopping Centre and the Sydney Convention Centre (refer to **Figures 5 and 8**).



Figure 8 - Existing site links and proposed improvements to access.

3.5 Vehicular Access and Servicing

The proposed development involves the reconfiguration of existing vehicle entrances to the site including the re-direction of vehicular traffic and the creation of a new set down point and porte cochere.

3.6 Car Parking

No additional car parking is included in this proposal. Staff and guests will utilise the existing car parking leased by Accor Asia Pacific located below the existing Novotel building.

3.7 External Materials and Finishes

The proposed development will adopt a new contemporary façade, using a range of materials. Notwithstanding this, the predominant façade works will be limited to re-finishing (painting) of the existing façade. New lighting and rooftop signage will also be incorporated into the façade.

3.8 Staging

The proposed development will be inclusive of a number of stages including:

- Infill of the 'ziggurat' section of the existing building;
- Construction of new 3 storey building adjoining the southern end of the main building; and
- Level 1 refurbishment, ground floor extension, external Murray street works and façade treatment.

A Staging Plan will be developed as part of the EAR to address staging in the context of engineering, the continuing operations of the hotel during this period and amenity of surrounding development and residents.

4.0 Scheme Justification as Part 3A Project

4.1 State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005

The Major Projects SEPP identifies development that is of state significance. Clause 6 of Major Projects SEPP provides that development, that in the opinion of the Minister for Planning is development of a kind referred to in Schedule 2 (Specified sites), is declared to be a project to which Part 3A of the Act applies.

Map 10 of Schedule 2 of the SEPP identifies the site as a Sydney Harbour Foreshore Site. Further, Item 10 of Schedule 2, states that development with a capital investment value of more than \$5 million within a Sydney Harbour Foreshore Site is declared to be a project to which Part 3A of the Act applies.

4.2 Capital Investment Value

The estimated capital investment value of the proposal is approximately \$58 million which exceeds the threshold for development on a Sydney Harbour Foreshore Site in Item 10, Schedule 2 of the Major Projects SEPP.

4.3 Consent authority

As discussed above the estimated capital investment value of the project has exceeded the threshold and therefore this application, in accordance with the Major Projects SEPP, will be determined by the Minister for Planning. SHFA has advised that it is likely the Director-General of the Department of Planning will use his discretion to delegate his assessment function under Part 3A of the Act to SHFA.

In accordance with this advice, this preliminary environmental assessment has been submitted to SHFA. It is expected that the response to this preliminary environmental assessment, the Requirements of the Director-General for the preparation of the full environmental assessment, will clarify the ongoing consultation process and whether an assessment will be made by SHFA or the NSW Department of Planning.

5.0 Consultation

As part of preparing the proposal for the expansion of Novotel Darling Harbour, Accor Asia Pacific have undertaken consultation with SHFA. A number of meetings have already been undertaken with SHFA the purpose being to:

- Present an overview of the project;
- Address any key concerns raised by SHFA; and
- Discuss the application process;

Additional consultation with surrounding land owners and stakeholders will be undertaken and discussed in the EAR at the Project Application stage.

6.0 Relevant Planning Instruments and Controls

6.1 Relevant Planning Instruments

The following planning instruments are relevant to the proposed development:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005;
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 64 - Advertising and Signage;
- Draft State Environmental Planning Policy No. 66 - Integration of Land Use and Transport.
- Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005;
- Darling Harbour Development Plan No. 1 (DHDP 1);
- City of Sydney Tourist and Accommodation Development Control Plan 2006; and
- City of Sydney Signage and Advertising Structures Development Control Plan 2005.

6.1.1 Key planning controls

The key planning controls for the development are set out in **Table 1** below.

The site is unzoned as it is contained in an area previously governed by the *Darling Harbour Authority Act 1984* which has since been repealed. Although the site is 'unzoned' a list of permissible uses for the site are included in Clause 6 of the DHDP 1. The proposed development retains the existing tourist use of the site which is permissible with development consent (or a 'permit') under Clause 6 of the Darling Harbour Development Plan No. 1.

Table 1 - Key Planning Controls

Instruments / Guidelines	Standard / Development Control
SEPP (Major Projects)	Item 10, Schedule 2 (refer to Section 4.0 of this report)
SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005	Provides planning principles to ensure that development enhances and protects the aesthetic and natural features of the Sydney Harbour Catchment.
DHDP 1	Provides a list of development permissible for the site.

6.2 Metro Strategy

The NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy identifies Sydney as Australia's only global city and an important region in the Pacific Rim. The proposed development includes additional high quality tourist accommodation which will contribute to Sydney's importance as a global city consistent with the Metro Strategy.

7.0 Preliminary Environmental Assessment

The following is our preliminary scope of the environmental assessment issues relating to the proposed expansion of the Novotel Darling Harbour. The key issues associated with the proposed development are:

- Compliance with statutory plans;
- Built form;
- Streetscape and public domain;
- Impact on adjoining properties;
- Internal amenity;
- Pedestrian access and circulation;
- Traffic, transport and parking;
- Waste Management;
- Social and economic issues;
- Energy efficiency;
- Structural integrity;
- Demolition, earthworks and construction impacts;
- Services; and
- BCA issues.

7.1 Compliance with Statutory Plans

The proposed development is permissible with consent as listed in Clause 6 of the Darling Harbour Development Plan No. 1.

The EAR will be supported by Tables of Compliance which will address relevant controls in the EPI's listed in Section 6.1 of this report.

7.2 Built Form

The main issues relating to the built form that will be addressed in the Environmental Assessment Report are:

- The bulk, scale, massing and form of the proposed building alterations in relation to the surrounding developments; and
- The detailed design of building forms including the articulation of the façade and material selection.

It is noted that there are no controls for FSR or building height for the site and therefore bulk, scale and massing will be the predominant merit issue for the assessment of the proposal.

The EAR will be supported by Architectural Plans and a design statement.

7.3 Streetscape and Public Domain

The main issues relating to the streetscape and public domain are:

- Legibility and accessibility of the hotel entrance along Murray Street;
- Impact upon view corridors, in particular views along:
 - Bunn Street to the east (Darling Harbour and Sydney CBD);
 - Allen to the east (Sydney CBD); and
 - Along Murray Street (Pyrmont).

7.4 Impact on Adjoining Properties

The main issues relating to the potential impact on adjoining properties are:

- Sunlight access and overshadowing on surrounding residential properties, paths and roadways;
- Outlook and visual privacy; and
- Acoustic privacy.

Preliminary studies have already been undertaken into the potential for view loss from the adjacent residential apartment building on Murray Street. The EAR will be supported by detailed View Analysis.

7.5 Internal Amenity

The EAR will consider:

- Internal circulation throughout the hotel, in particular in and around the revised hotel entrance off Murray Street and through the Ground Floor reception;
- Ventilation and natural light; and
- Functionality, legibility and connectivity.

7.6 Pedestrian Access and Circulation

The EAR will consider:

- Accessibility of the hotel from Murray Street;
- Connectivity and legibility of the through site link to Darling Harbour;
- Separation of pedestrian, service and car park entry points;
- Internal circulation of people, in particular around the main entrance to the Ground Floor off Murray Street; and
- Provision of escalators and lifts for hotel guests.

The EAR will be supported by an Accessibility Report.

7.7 Traffic, Transport and Parking

The EAR will consider:

- Existing traffic conditions on the surrounding road network;
- Existing road and intersections capacity;
- The impact of increased traffic on intersections in the vicinity of the hotel during construction and operation;
- Existing use of the drop off and pick up location;
- The impact of the new vehicle entrance and traffic directions off Murray Street;
- Measures to promote the use of public transport; and
- Provision of car parking.

The EAR will be supported by an Access, Transport and Traffic Report.

7.8 Waste Management

The EAR will consider:

- Treatment of and disposal of waste during construction and operation; and
- Mitigation measures to minimise the generation of waste.

The EAR will include a Waste Management Plan.

7.9 Social and Economic Issues

The proposed development will make a significant social and economic contribution to the Darling Harbour area and Sydney CBD. The EAR will consider the impact of the proposed development in the context of:

- Hotel accommodation demand and supply and medium to long term trends;
- Increased part-time and full-time employment during construction and operation; and
- Improved function and conference facilities.

7.10 Energy Efficiency

The EAR will address:

- Impact upon energy efficiency of the hotel; and
- Measures to improve energy efficiency.

The EAR will be supported by an Energy Efficiency Report.

7.11 Structural integrity

Preliminary studies have been undertaken to ensure that the existing car parking structure and Novotel building have the structural capacity to accommodate the proposed additions.

The EAR will be supported by an Engineering Report.

7.12 Demolition, Earthworks and Construction Impacts

The EAR will address the impact of the works during construction on:

- The existing operation of the hotel and car parks during demolition and construction works;
- Impact of noise, dust, vibration, soil, erosion, water and the treatment of waste materials on the surrounding area;
- Health and safety; and
- Hours of operation.

The EAR will be supported by a Construction Management Plan.

7.13 Services

The EAR will address the availability and provision of services including capacity of water, sewer, stormwater, power and telecommunications. Any upgrading works to infrastructure will be addressed as necessary to service the development as well as the impacts that this may have on the provision of services to the surrounding area.

7.14 BCA Issues

The EAR will consider compliance with the BCA. The EAR will be supported by a BCA statement.

8.0 Summary & Conclusion

Accor Asia Pacific propose an expansion to the Novotel Darling Harbour hotel. It will involve:

- Extensions to the upper floors of the existing 'ziggurat' hotel building to accommodate 136 additional rooms with no increase in building height;
- Development of a new 3 storey building to the south adjoining the existing hotel building to accommodate 96 additional rooms;
- Increasing the GFA to approximately 40,464m²;
- Internal alterations to the existing hotel building to improve guest reception management;
- Alterations to the external building façade including a new plaza entrance at Murray Street;
- Reconfiguration of existing vehicle entrances and new port cochere; and
- Enhancing the through existing site link to Darling Harbour.

This project application is submitted to the SHFA in accordance with the requirements of Part 3A of the Act.

We trust the information provided in this report is sufficient for the Minister for Planning to determine that the extension to Novotel Darling Harbour is a development of the kind described in Schedule 2 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005, and therefore is a 'major project' to be determined under Part 3A of the Act.

It is requested that:

- The Minister form the opinion that the proposed expansion is a major project under Part 3A;
- The Director-General prepare and issue the Environmental Assessment Requirements; and
- The Director-General consider delegating the assessment of the Environmental Assessment to SHFA.

The key issues that will be addressed in the planning and design of the proposed development and in the final Environmental Assessment Report are as follows:

- Compliance with statutory plans;
- Built form;
- Streetscape and public domain;
- Impact on adjoining properties;
- Internal amenity;
- Pedestrian access and circulation;
- Traffic, transport and parking;
- Waste Management;
- Social and economic issues;
- Energy efficiency;

- Structural integrity;
- Demolition, earthworks and construction impacts;
- Services; and
- BCA issues.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Gordon Kirkby (Associate) at JBA Urban Planning Consultants Pty Ltd on 9956 6962.