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Museum of Contemporary Art

Museum of Contemporary Art
Redevelopment Project

Crime Prevention Through
Environmental Design Assessment

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1. Introduction

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) proposes to redevelop and expand the museum, located in The Rocks.

The redevelopment involves an addition to the northern part of the building and refurbishment to the existing MCA building, and includes a new entrance, provision of new technology, gallery spaces and cultural uses associated with the museum as well as ancillary uses such as educational facilities, informal café, enhanced restaurant, venue spaces and museum retail shop. The redevelopment would also address the non compliance of the current building in regard to access for all.

This assessment has been prepared by GHD Pty Ltd in accordance with *Crime prevention and the assessment of development applications, Guidelines under section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 2001).



2. Crime prevention guidelines

Crime prevention and the assessment of development applications, Guidelines under section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 2001) is intended to help councils identify crime risk and minimise opportunities for crime through the appropriate assessment of development proposals.

This guideline uses Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) which is a crime prevention strategy and focuses on reducing the opportunities for crime through the planning, design and structure of the built environment. This is achieved through:

- » Maximising the risk to offenders through increasing the likelihood of detection and challenge;
- » Maximising the effort required to commit an offence;
- » Minimising the perceived benefits of crime; and
- » Minimising the opportunity to facilitate inappropriate behaviour.

The intention of this assessment is to assist in reducing both the preception and ability to commit crime within and around the MCA by creating and maintaining a safe environment.

Part B, Principles for minimising crime risk of the Guidelines sets out the the four key CPTED principles which have been implemented in the design of the MCA redevelopment to minimise the opportunity for crime. These are:

- » Surveillance;
- » Access control;
- » Territorial reinforcements; and
- » Space management.

CPTED takes its direction from the evaluation criteria under section 79C of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). Consideration is specifically given to section 79C (b) and (c) in terms of crime prevention.

These relate to:

- “(b) *the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts of the locality, and*
- (c) *the suitability of the site for development”.*

This assessment is specific to crime prevention and an assessment of the developments compliance with these four CPTED principles and how the proposed development design assists in minimising the opportunity to commit crime and maximising safety in the areas directly surrounding the MCA is provided.



3. Surveillance

3.1 General

Providing effective surveillance of areas within and surrounding a site can assist in reducing the attractiveness of crime targets. Surveillance of an area can be achieved through both natural and technical means.

Passive surveillance, where people can see what others are doing, creates a sense of safety within an environment and provides opportunities for interaction between individuals. This and high levels of passive surveillance, deters offenders from committing crime.

The proposal meets these surveillance requirements by being located in an area with high passive surveillance. This specifically relates to the activities along George Street and First Fleet Park and The Rocks Police Station. The MCA is adjacent to The Rocks Police Station, which will assist in the deterrence of crime around most of the building.

Additionally there is additional security provided by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) through its dedicated rangers who patrol the area and CCTV coverage both in George Street and off the eastern decks of the MCA which is directly linked back to the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Rangers Security Office.

Further to this the MCA currently has third party contractor security patrols checking the building and its environment on a nightly basis which will continue under the proposed redevelopment.

The area of this development most vulnerable to possible crime is the southern end of the existing MCA building. This area however, has clear sightlines, sufficient lighting and low scale landscaping to deter any possible criminal activity. The proposed extension of the MCA will address this aspect of the CPTED principles through a number of design features, as outlined below.

3.2 Sightlines

The design of the development is such that it will maintain sightlines to key places and between public and private spaces. Sightlines between public and private spaces will be developed and maintained to avoid blind spots where there is a reduced opportunity to see and be seen. The sightline to the southern portion of the site from George Street and Circular Quay will be maintained by not developing in the area of the sightline. Landscaping in this area will also be of smaller plants.

3.3 Lighting

At present the eastern facade of the existing building is uplit at night with floodlights. The provision of new external façade lighting apart from security lighting is not included in the scope of works for this redevelopment.



Effective lighting of public spaces will increase the perception of safety and deter crime. Security lighting surrounding the MCA development will be designed to ensure appropriate surveillance and avoid shadows and glare which might put people at risk of crime.

The lighting of the existing building façade, the surrounds and internal spaces of the museum will attract people to the area. This will be a deterrent to crime in the immediate area.

External security lighting will be provided to the new building. Motion detectors will trigger local external lights in the spaces between the old and new buildings as a deterrent to acts of crime in these locations.

3.4 Landscaping

It is important that landscaping does not provide offenders with a place to hide or entrap victims. Landscaping directly surrounding the development will be of an appropriate scale and form such that it does not remove areas from public surveillance or create pockets of isolation, which would provide offenders with the opportunity to commit crime.

Landscaping directly surrounding the current MCA building consists of large pockets of open space and formal pathways permitting constant passive surveillance. Limited shrubbery exists within the environment. Additional landscaping proposed as part of this development would adopt similar landscaping principles.

Landscaping is a small component of the proposed redevelopment given the limited open space within which it is situated. It is proposed to provide upgraded landscaping to the Circular Quay side of the building. This involves the new Level 1 terraces to the east of the existing building and grassed ramps up to such terraces with hard paving and seating to the east of the main public entrance area. The proposed grassed area provides a usable surface to relax on and view the promenade and Circular Quay.

This proposed landscaping will not remove areas from public surveillance or create pockets of isolation.



4. Access control

4.1 General

By clearly defining areas accessible to the public and providing physical and symbolic barriers to attract and channel the movement of people it will be difficult for offenders to reach victims and opportunity to commit crime will be minimised. Access control for the proposed MCA development will be achieved through implementing a number of measures, as outlined below.

4.2 Landscaping

Existing landscaping and facilities including grassed areas, benches and formal walkways encourages the movement of people to and within a specific area. Creating this landscape and physical environment which channels and groups pedestrians into target areas limits the possibility for the isolation of individuals and crime.

The proposed development adopts these landscaping principles and identifies clear access routes to the MCA and within the environment directly surrounding this building. This is achieved through the building design and the proposed landscaping.

The proposed MCA development will contribute to the pleasant environment which currently exists within this area of Circular Quay. Pedestrian movement is constant in the area and this is facilitated through numerous physical and symbolic barriers and facilities including grassed and paved areas. The proposal will contribute to the existing public space, making people feel comfortable and safe. The continuation of this maintained public space will decrease the possibility crime within this area.

4.3 Public spaces

All contractors, venue hire clients, caterers, event companies and non exhibition related personnel are required to sign in and be identified at the MCA Security Office located in MCA loading dock area. Contractors unfamiliar with this procedure who report to the reception desk in the entrance foyer will be referred on to the Security Office for authorisation.

Clear wayfinding through the proposed central circulation spine will restrict exhibition visitors to only the public areas of the Museum.

All gallery and exhibition spaces are patrolled by MCA Visitor Service Officers who are equipped with two way radios and have direct contact with MCA security personnel.

All public areas of the museum are under direct CCTV surveillance and this is expected by visitors to an art museum

4.4 Access and legibility

One of the key intentions of this redevelopment project is to make clear and equitable access to and within the MCA for all who use it. The redevelopment will incorporate



and promote the principles of legibility to allow people to select the most appropriate route and remove the possibility for wandering or getting lost. The creation of this legible space will provide people with more confidence and reduce the stress associated with an unfamiliar environment.

A combination of restricting access to internal or high risk areas through the use of physical barriers, and clear signage in logical spaces will provide the opportunity to control pedestrian activity within the vicinity of the development and guide pedestrians in their movement around the site. The design will avoid creating ambiguity or confusion when users approach the building. This will be achieved through the well defined public entrance, which can be identified through signage (day and night) and appropriate internal and external lighting. These features will assist in highlighting the function of the museum as one that is open for public view. The public and non public areas will be further controlled through the MCA Visitor Services Officer patrols.



5. Territorial reinforcements

5.1 General

Defining what is public and private territory assists in determining the function of a space and the appropriate behaviour within a space. This definition enhances the informal security presence within and around the MCA.

5.2 Design of public space

The design of the MCA, its physical appearance and surrounding environment would be such that it will encourage people to gather in an area of public space and consequently provide them with some responsibility for its use and condition. This would be achieved through implementing design principles including landscaping which is reflective of the surrounding environment and its function. These design principles will create a pleasant environment and encourage use of the area as an active public space. Further, it will promote the MCA as a public building open for visitation by all members of the public.

5.3 Design with distinction of public and private space

The MCA design will have clear transitions and boundaries between public and private space. The proposed grassed and paved ramps will clearly form part of the public domain, with the glass entry doors defining the entrance to the private space of the MCA. Notwithstanding this, the intention is to create a public 'street' through the building, with a view corridor provided between the George Street entrance and the Circular Quay concourse. This public 'street' will only be accessible during opening hours of the MCA. This will ensure the safety of the building after museum opening hours.

Internal signage will also distinguish between public and private space within the building itself and inform users of what the intended purpose of an area is for.

5.4 Design in terms of intended use of space

The intended use of areas will be clearly defined. Public spaces will not restrict visitor movement while private spaces will be formalised by gates and enclosures.



6. Space management

Management of the area surrounding the MCA will promote the message that both the community and pedestrians respect this environment. Through the appropriate coordination of the site, maintaining the building and surrounds, repairing vandalism as it occurs and retaining and improving when needed pedestrian facilities including lighting, will ensure that the space is appropriately utilised and well cared for. Developing this respect for a site will assist in reducing crime.

6.1 Facilities and utilities

Management of the MCA and its surrounding environment would be an ongoing process, and will be carried out in conjunction with the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) as landowner. Proper facilities management will ensure that all facilities associated with the site are in appropriate condition. Regular maintenance of signage, lighting, and access areas will all assist in ensuring the development is safe for all who use it.

6.2 Strategies for space management

In conjunction with SHFA, the MCA will ensure that the following strategies will be maintained:

- » Activity coordination;
- » Site cleanliness;
- » Rapid repair of vandalism and graffiti;
- » Replacement of damaged pedestrian and car park lighting; and
- » Removal or refurbishment of decayed physical elements.



7. Conclusion

The CPTED principles will assist in creating and maintaining an environment that aims to limit crime and encourages people to conduct their pursuits with respect in a safe environment.

The MCA development will integrate the four principles of surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcements and space management into the design and operation of the museum so that it will successfully contribute to, and improve the existing environment within which it is located.

The MCA is in a highly used public area and this will reinforce the public surveillance in the area. This surveillance will be further supported by The Rocks NSW Police Station located adjacent to the MCA.

It is believed that this development complies with the four CPTED principles as set out in Part B, Principles for minimising risk of the crime prevention guidelines and the requirements of Section 79C of the EP&A Act. The proposed development design assists in minimising the opportunity to commit crime and maximising safety in the areas directly surrounding the MCA.





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