

**Royal Agricultural Show, Sydney Showground Exhibition Hall Expansion
Part 3A DA application - Design Statement****Introduction**

The original redevelopment of the Sydney Showgrounds at Sydney Olympic Park dates back to 1998 in preparation for the hosting of the 2000 Olympic Games. Since then the building was handed back to the Royal Agricultural Society and the building has successfully accommodated a variety of significant shows, events and conferences. The most significant of which is the annual Sydney Royal Easter Show which occupies a full five week period all staged around the Easter weekend. This show currently contributes to the majority of the company's attendance and turnover. Nevertheless the remainder of the business occurring throughout year has grown successfully in booking numbers and scale. Pressure has been placed on the facility to cope with the growing demand in size and delivery of service. The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition industry (MICE) is of significant importance to State as it generates multiplier economic benefit beyond that which goes to the facility. In order to protect this business the State, SOPA and RAS have considered improvements and enhancements to meet these demands as well as improving the daily operations in set up and break down.

ARCHITECTURE
PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN**Design Competition**

This pressure instigated an invited design competition in 2008 which required the design of an expansion of the facility to double its size. This consultant team won the competition and the expansion design of the exhibition centre at Sydney Olympic Park created the following opportunities:

- An increase in the attractiveness of Sydney as a destination for Exhibitions and Conventions due to increased overall capacity
- The creation of differentiated products in Homebush and Darling Harbour that are attractive to a broader range of Exhibitions and Conventions with consequent increases in regional market share
- Address the functional and operational deficiencies of the existing Exhibition Centre to improve its attractiveness and maximise utilisation
- Increased flexibility of RAS facilities so they can serve multiple uses and thus increase in their productive use between Easter Shows
- Increased activity around the Sydney Olympic Park town centre and reinforce the quality and amenity of this evolving urban environment
- Build on Sydney Olympic Parks best practice approach to environmental sustainability

Our proposal is designed such that these opportunities are fully grasped and expressed to their optimum potential.

John O'Neill had noted in his review of the Convention and Exhibition Industry in NSW that the proposed expansion of Convention, Conference and Exhibition facilities at the Sydney Showgrounds (SSG) offers opportunities of great significance to New South Wales although the facilities within Sydney require rationalisation. In addition it was apparent that some of the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) facilities at Sydney Olympic Park were not fully utilised outside of the Easter Show period, and that the existing exhibition facility has certain functional deficiencies.

This report and the budgetary realignment of state funding due to the Mini-Budget placed the winning competition project on hold. This created additional pressure on the operations requiring the facility to consider progressive enhancements as a solution to retain its existing business and attract new business. A long term staging program was therefore developed to provide the necessary enhancements and improvements to meet budgetary constraints but still specifically improve the facilities that the business could offer its current repeat clients.

Urban Design and Architectural Response

Our view is that the existing Showground Exhibition and Convention Centre is a grounded and earthy expression that can be seen in its geographical and political context as a celebration of the land. Our concept is to express the expansion of the building in a way that simultaneously compliments the existing buildings. At the same time the expansion is consistent with Sydney Olympic Parks urban form and responds to the joyful celebration that is the Royal Easter Show

The existing Exhibition Facility designed by Ancher Mortlock Woolley has a carefully modulated external appearance. The interior use of timber pushed the use of this material to the structural limit and responded to the organic foundation of the Royal Agricultural Society.

The Cox Group Pty Ltd
ACN 002535891
Nominated Architects
John Richardson No. 3162
Ian McGilvray No. 5545PO Box Q193 Sydney NSW 1230
Level 2, 204 Clarence St
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
T + 61 2 9267 9599
F + 61 2 9264 5844
www.cox.com.au

Our expansion proposal is not to mimic that form but to express similar ideas in a different way, enriching the original yet distinguishing with a modular design that responds to the existing but generates a fresh interpretation of the aesthetic.

3. Planning Response

This application is for the first stage of the expansion proposal and plans to create an improved public face to the building with an indoor concourse and foyers to gain access to the dome and each of the exhibition halls off Riverina Avenue. It will enhance the public amenity and access to meeting rooms by relocating them to the ground floor along the concourse interior. These facilities are currently accommodated in three two storey pod buildings. These buildings are currently disconnected and become impediments to the improvements required so along with the external tensile fabric canopy they will be demolished. This would allow the concourse to relate strongly to Riverina Avenue and thereby allow each exhibition hall to command its own entry.

The development of the form for this expansion has been derived from the need for the concourse to seamlessly accommodate the expansion of the next stage regardless of its timing. The design has also been consciously planned with future proofing so that the concourse can change its current planned relationship to the building as a side entry to the existing halls to become the central spinal or internal street for the completed expansion.

The spatial need for the concourse is such that sufficient space is provided for the concourse to double up as a pre-function space for the exhibition halls. This requires that activities can be held for the delegate and visitors within the space with acoustic absorption to reduce cross talk and interference to adjoining pre-functions and the halls. The meeting rooms and ablutions are designed such that they may serve either way - into the concourse or into the exhibition halls. Critically the space is supplemented with the required services pits to provide any myriad of service a function may require. This results in the concourse space performing a multi-function activity that adequately satisfies improved service to the businesses clientele.

In addition to the concourse addition the interior air-conditioning for the existing halls is to be improved to function successfully in summer and winter modes. Although the building was originally naturally ventilated some temporary air-conditioning was added which required some modifications to the building envelope including the ventilation louvers for the building. However this has not been a total success and the system has been re-engineered. This plant will be relocated to the roof of the concourse above the meeting rooms, ablutions and foyers. This equipment is concealed from view by the raised roof of the concourse while the new supply ducting will enter the hall roofs at the base of the curve.

The material and structure are all selected to best integrate with the existing facility originally designed by Ancher, Mortlock & Woolley to respect the original scheme and provide an integrated final solution. Internally the materials are selected to be durable and low maintenance.

Environmental Response

The proposed glazed façade system is designed to control heat and glare from the east and west orientations. This climate control system will generate significant energy efficiencies for the expansion facility via reduced direct solar penetration, combined with high performance glazing.

It is assumed that stormwater is already harvested from the large expanse of the existing exhibition roofs and connected to the water reclamation and management scheme (WRAMS) within Sydney Olympic Park. Stormwater from the expansion roof would also be connected to WRAMS.

The design incorporates skylights above the foyer and concourse zone. The skylight system will permit daylight penetration to the internal edge of these public spaces, minimizing the necessity of artificial lighting and further reducing power consumption.

Conclusion

We believe our proposal for the expansion of convention, conference and exhibition facilities at the Sydney Showgrounds presents the RAS and SOPA with an optimum solution architecturally, spatially, functionally and environmentally. It's most salient aspect is that its conception an integrated architecture both reflects the cultural underpinnings of the Royal Agricultural Society and creates a distinct 'brand' identity for the overall facility. The intent of the design is to meet the needs of the business while providing an appropriate and integrated expansion for what has become synonymous with the heritage of the Sydney Olympics.