

22 November 2019

Our Ref: R/2015/41/N
File No: 2019/590892

David Glasgow
Principal Planning Officer
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

By email: David.Glasgow@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear David

Request for Advice – IMAX Redevelopment (SSD 7388 MOD 10) – 31-33 Wheat Road, Sydney

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 November 2019 requesting for the City of Sydney Council (“the City”) to comment on Modification 10 to the State Significant Development Application (SSD) for the IMAX Redevelopment. The proposed modifications primarily relate to the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) building and involves the following:

- Redesign of the floor plates and modification to the form of the western elevation;
- Relocation of public amenities including bathrooms, parent rooms and first aid within the ground floor;
- Provision of additional retail space on the ground floor to tenancies 08 and 09;
- Redesign of the existing plant room to provide access to the roof plant;
- Provision of additional rooftop plant area; and
- Reduction of the size of the first floor SHFA offices and lobby area on the ground floor.

Additionally, the application proposes modifications to the Ribbon building porte cochere form and material finishes, modifications to the playground area and reconfiguration of bicycle parking, adjustment of public domain levels at the front of the building to provide stepped levels and adjustment of the approved signage zones.

The supporting documentation has been reviewed and the City makes the following comments regarding the proposal:

1. Pedestrian Wind Environment

The proposal involves modifications to the façade of the SHFA building, resulting in a curved form along the western frontage. It is noted that the site experiences strong wind conditions. The modification application was not accompanied with a supporting wind impact statement, confirming that the proposed amendments to the façade would not adversely impact on the pedestrian and standing comfort levels already considered for the overall development.

Therefore, consideration must be made to any impacts that the amended façade would have to local wind conditions and assurance that the proposal maintains satisfactory levels of pedestrian comfort, particularly within the public domain.

2. Addressing the Public Domain

It is encouraged that the proposed modifications to the western façade and the ground floor retains transparency and limit areas of concealment within the newly created recesses on the western elevation so as to maximise visibility to the internal uses at ground level.

3. Public Domain

3.1. Public Domain Levels and Design

Grading of footway is unclear. The proposal notes that the existing approved design has a 1:50 – 1:100 cross fall from the site boundary to the north, to the building line of The Ribbon. Terraced footways should consider appropriate cross-falls and drainage to prevent localised ponding on footways.

Further, consideration should be given to the cluttering of the public domain and the reduction of clear passageways in this busy area. The width of the upper footway between the north elevation of the Ribbon building to the proposed public domain elements of seating and landscaping has a pinch point adjacent to the proposed outdoor dining areas. The proposed outdoor areas for the Ribbon building is subject to a separate Development Application (D/2019/1231) delegated to the City that is currently under assessment. It proposes outdoor seating widths of approximately 2.3m from the Ribbon building. The City recommends at least a minimum 4m footway width travel path be maintained for a clear path of travel between the proposed public domain embellishments and future outdoor seating zones.

3.2. Playground

It is considered that the proposed modifications to the playground on the western portion of the site is generally acceptable. However, relocation of the palm groves and new seating elements orientated towards the harbour detracts from the usability of the space for events and the visibility of the City Screen that is referenced in the architectural plans. Consideration should be given to views to the screen and potential visual and physical barriers.

3.3. Flooding

The site is located within the Darling Harbour Catchment and is flood prone. The proposed modifications include changes to the approved elevations and floor levels of the SFHA building. The amendments must be consistent with the required flood planning levels and comply with the City of Sydney Interim Floodplain Management Policy.

4. Transport and Bicycle Parking

The proposed relocation of the bicycle parking predominately retains visibility as well as a path of travel for pedestrians within the public domain and is supported.

The City assumes that the provision of 176 bicycle parking spaces in the public domain does not alter or reduce from the required 239 bicycle spaces to be provided within the ground floor level of the podium as per Condition No. B10 of the Development Consent.

Notwithstanding the above, it should be identified that the submitted Traffic Assessment Statement, prepared by GTA Consultants, makes reference to the *“changes in the ‘loop’ road section of the forecourt”*, and is resulted from requests from Transport for NSW. The submitted architectural plans and the Modification Statement do not make reference to this aspect of the porte cochere, which addresses the form and materiality only.

In consideration of the above and the discrepancies in the submitted documentation, the City cannot comment on the loop road, should it be a component of this application. Further clarification should be sought from the applicant.

Overall, it is requested that the above matters be considered in any approval for the modification application and conditions of consent be imposed accordingly.

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Reinah Urqueza, Specialist Planner, on 9265 9333 or at rurqueza@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Rees
Area Planning Manager