

20 December 2021

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File No: 2021/561165
Your Ref: SSD-10384-Mod-1

Candice Pon
Planning Officer
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Via Planning Portal

Dear Candice

SSD 10384 MOD 1 – Removal and replacement of 2 trees on Gloucester Walk – Advice on Response to Submissions

Thank you for your correspondence dated 9 December 2021 inviting the City of Sydney Council (“the City”) to provide comments on the submitted Response to Submissions (RtS) on the proposed modifications to the approved State Significant Development (SSD) application for the adaptive reuse, alterations and additions to the Sirius building to remove two trees from Gloucester Walk to facilitate the development.

The City has reviewed the documentation submitted with the RtS and notes documentation from the consulting structural engineer SCP and arborist ‘Landscape Matrix’ recommend the existing retaining wall adjacent to Trees 50 and 51 in Gloucester Walk be removed to repair the wall.

The structural engineer states that the wall has already failed, however, the trees are still standing, and no information of root plate instability has been reported. It is likely that tree roots are deflecting along the back of the wall (potentially stabilising the soil). Given the site constraints (west retaining wall) it is likely that the majority of the tree’s roots are growing east (away from the retaining wall). This means that the removal of the retaining wall (west) is less likely to cause whole tree failure towards the east. The trees are restrained from failing west due to the proximity of the existing building.

Non-destructive root mapping would give a greater understanding of the existing root activity and tree stability. Without carrying out root mapping, the current site conditions have not been fully assessed, therefore the proposed designs have not been fully informed by existing site conditions and constraints and the City is unable to support the removal of the trees.

SCP has proposed two alternative options that would retain both trees i.e. rock anchors and a new wall in front of existing wall:

- *Option 1 - Rock Anchors*

The letter prepared by SCP dated 9 December 2021 states that the minimum rock anchor length required is 6 metres and that the maximum length available is 6

metres. This could be a viable option if further explored and accurate measurements were considered.

- *Option 2 - New Wall in front of Existing Wall*

Only one method of installing a new wall in front of the existing wall (within the basement) has been explored. This method would require large machinery that does not fit in the available space and demolition of existing footing. Other excavation methods and designs to construct a new wall in front of the existing wall and footing have not been explored. Note: The structural engineer reports refer to wall failure but not failure of the existing footing.

The City suggests the following alternatives that could be explored to retain the trees (subject to separate independent review by a qualified structural engineer):

- 1) Constructing the new wall and footing in front of the existing wall and footing without the use of large machinery. The existing retaining wall would be maintained with a new retaining wall and footing located within the carpark. See Option B annotated on the image below (NB: drawing requires separate review by a qualified structural engineer).

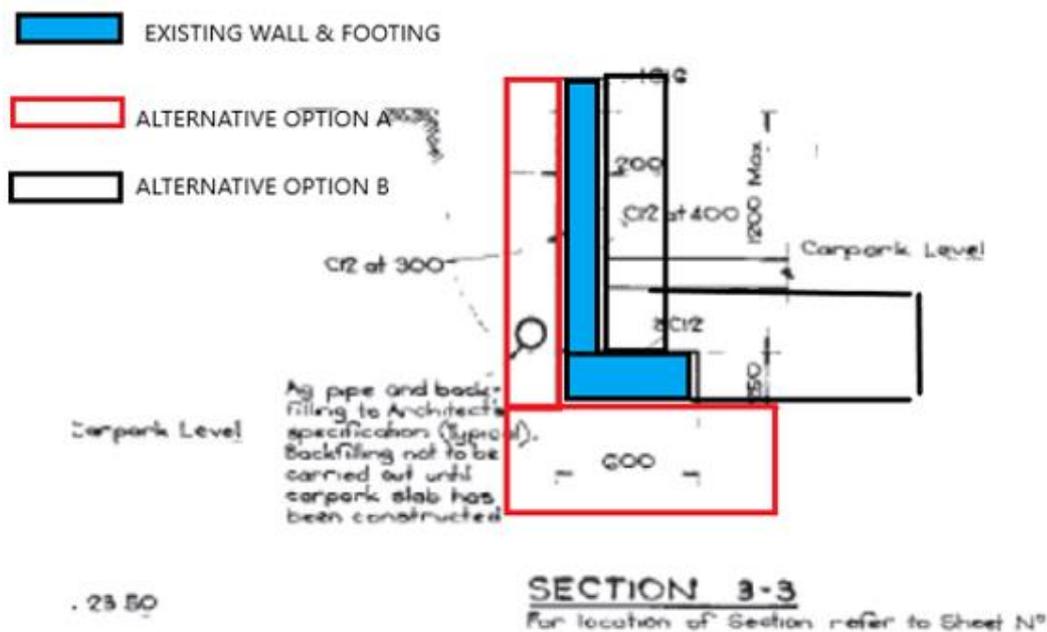


Figure 1 Alternative retaining wall construction

- 2) Undertake non-invasive root investigations to understand tree root activity, tree stability and to inform the proposed design. Root mapping is a common practice that forms part of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. In accordance with Australian Standards *'Protection of Trees on Development Sites'* AS 4970-2009, root mapping is undertaken when a major development incursion is proposed within the Tree protection Zone of trees to be retained.
- 3) Sensitively and selectively remove and construct small sections of the wall without damaging structural roots.

Overall, the City maintains that it does not support the removal of High Landscape Value trees numbered 50 and 51. The submitted documentation does not satisfactorily justify

tree removal and further investigations must be undertaken to retain the mature healthy trees that currently provide a high canopy cover and amenity to the area.

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Marie Burge, Senior Planner, on 9265 9333 or at mburge@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AR', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Rees
Area Planning Manager