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The Director
Department of Planning and Environment
320 Pitt Street, Sydney 2001
(For the attention of Ben Lusher, Director Key Sites Assessments)

13th May 2018

**Re: Application for Approval of Sydney Modern Art Gallery - SSD 3471
Concerns and Options**

Having considered both the original and amended designs for this proposal, I write because of my very serious concern about the application, which some weeks ago I also raised with the Minister. The issues go primarily to both the location of the site, and the inappropriate location and character of the proposed building. It is appreciated that the Gallery management has embarked on a long journey to reach this stage, and that the State Government has promised substantial funds for the project, but there are very good reasons for reconsideration before it is too late. Together with others I recently met with both the Gallery Director and Chairman of the Board to discuss the main issues, hoping that it might be possible to resolve our concerns. Unfortunately this did not occur and consequentially my strong reservations, -which are I know are shared by many others, - are summarized in this letter. There are obvious options which could readily address these challenges, and these are also summarized below.

CONCERNS

- (a) The Location The footprint of the new gallery sprawls over and alienates a very large area of a prominent and precious part of the public Domain. A large stand of mature trees, undercover growth and attractive public walks would be destroyed. This is largely due to the deeply flawed brief for the design competition, which unfortunately encouraged exploitation of this site..
- (b) The Siting, Form and Character of the Building These collectively result in the following serious adverse impacts:-
 - .Unduly large and unnecessary site coverage
 - .Highly assertive and over-complex architectural forms
 - .Blocking of valuable views from within the present Gallery
 - .No relationship or apparent acknowledgement of the presence of the NSW Art Gallery, an invaluable heritage item in our city. New structures are set far forward of the alignment of the façade of the Gallery, significantly exacerbating its intrusiveness. The 'before and after' images submitted by the applicant compellingly confirm the unrelated and unsympathetic nature of the design.
- (c) Excessive Cost The very steep site, together with the needlessly complex building footprint and forms would result together in extremely high construction costs. Although the State Government has guaranteed a very large contribution, and the Gallery management were confident that the remainder could be achieved by way of public fund-raising, a very significant part of this capital would in essence be needlessly and wastefully expended, and could much better be directed, -for example towards major new art acquisitions.

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OPTIONS TO RESOLVE CONCERNS

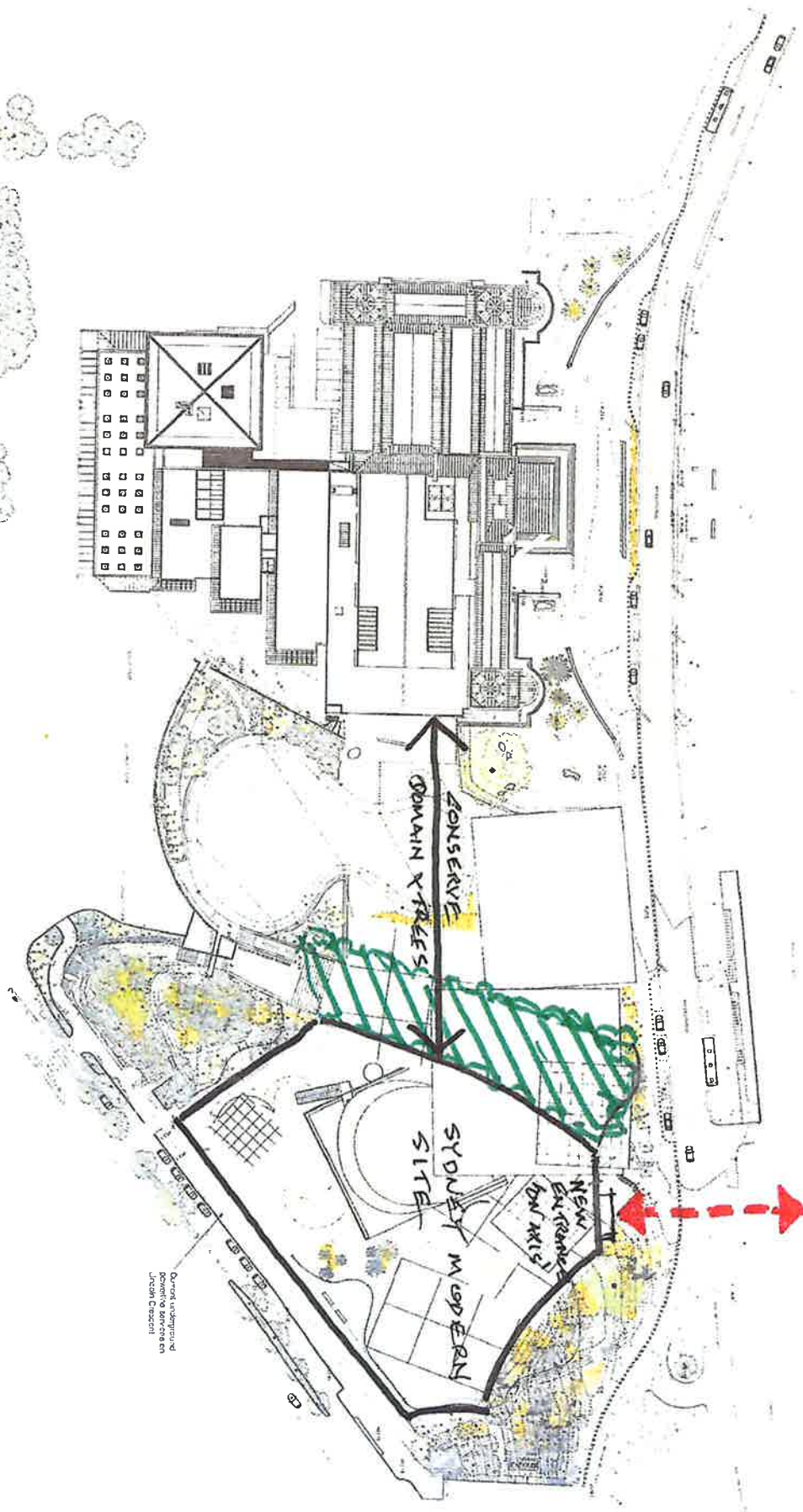
There are three quite apparent and very different options, each of which could overcome major objections, whilst each could produce an excellent outcome for the Gallery.

- (a) Redesign on Existing Development Site The required gallery areas could be accommodated on the northern part of this site, minimizing negative impacts. The significant major stand of trees could be retained, far less of the public Domain sacrificed, satisfactory relationship to the present Gallery and other heritage items achieved, and construction costs reduced, whilst creating an attractive and welcoming entrance to a new 'Sydney Modern'. (See attached Diagram 1)
- (b) Site to South-East of NSW Art Gallery A series of preliminary studies has confirmed that this would be an excellent site for the 'Sydney Modern', with the major advantage of direct connection to the existing building. Although the original submission canvassed and dismissed various options, strangely this appears *not* to have been investigated or included. (See Diagram 2) It is in my view strongly preferable because of very significant advantages:-
- . Connected building *with its own identity* which can be designed to sensitively complement the existing heritage Art Gallery
 - . Removes the need to duplicate administrative costs inherent in the management of two separate buildings.
 - . Provides both direct and clear access from the existing main entrance, and the option if desired for a *new and separate entrance* with its own identity
 - . Opportunity for far better Harbour views from all levels of the new Gallery
 - . Provides the 16,500m² floor area stated by the Gallery to be required, over 4 to 5 levels (as in the present proposal), but in a far more efficient manner.
 - . Very significant cost savings due to siting and logical building forms
 - . Option for attractive link to fuel bunkers/performance space still possible
- (c) Central site at 'Barangaroo' There are major advantages in this option, in particular:-
- . Easy access for the vast numbers of people living and working in the city
 - . Availability of spectacular space which would be ideal for modern art exhibitions
 - . Major saving in cost
- The Gallery management advised that this location had been given serious consideration but was not favoured, for reasons which are highly debatable.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss in more detail the issues and options available which cannot be covered in this summary letter.

Professor Peter Webber
May 2018

ENTRANCE TO
BUTANIC AREAS



*Overlaid on
applicant's landscape plan*
PIA GRAM I

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Project Name:
AGNSW Expansion: Sydney Modern Project
Address:
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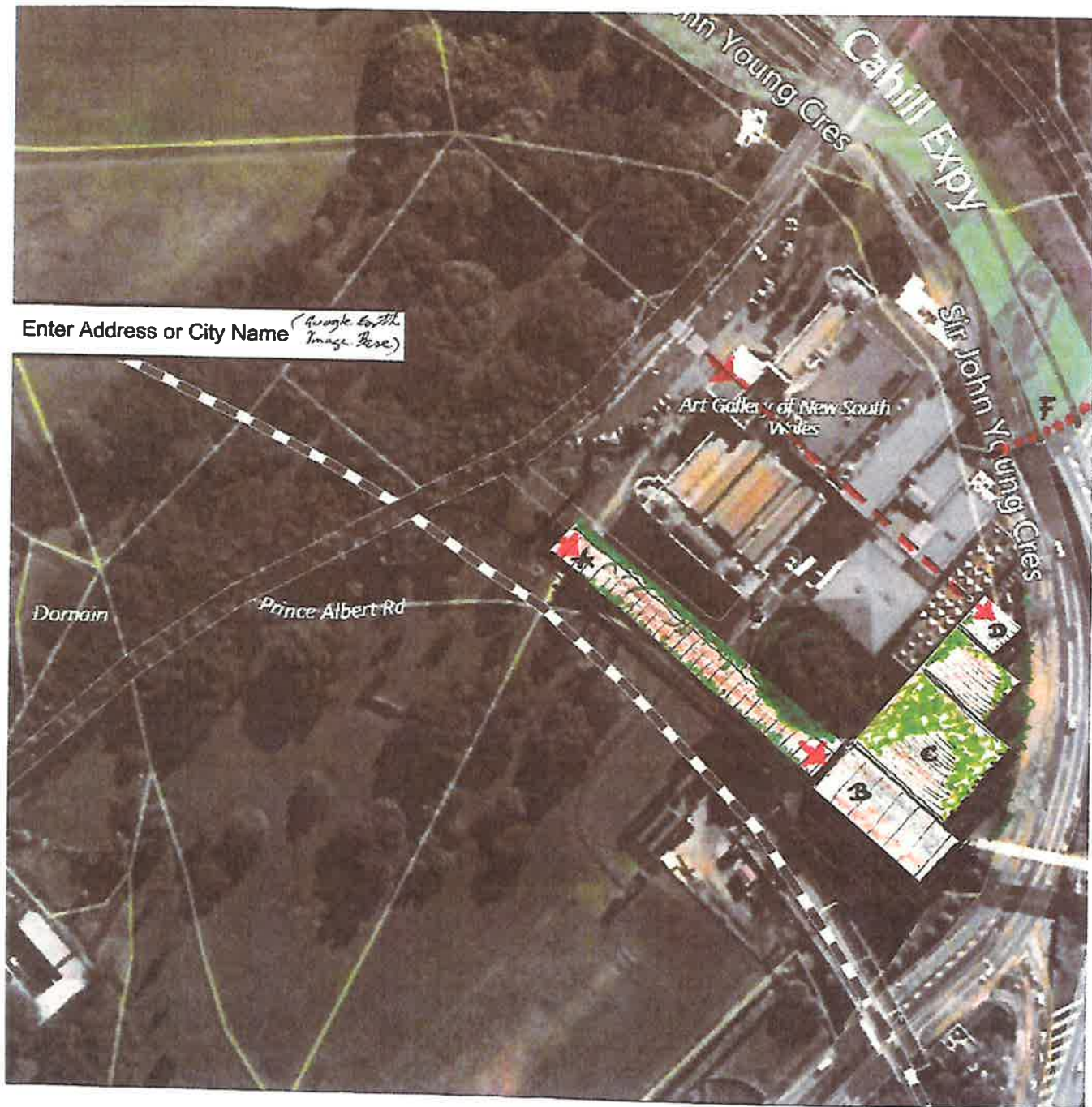
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1 of 1
Development Application
Landscape Master Plan - Final
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SYDNEY MODERN - PREFERRED SITE

DIAGRAM 2

A & B NEW MAIN ENTRANCE and LOBBY

Existing Gallery entrance also would provide direct entry to new Gallery, but if required this would give distinctive separate landscaped 'sculpture walk' and 'floating' section alongside large ficus

C. NEW GALLERY

Extends over 4 to 6 levels with escalators and lift connections, all with views to harbour

D. CONNECTION TO EXISTING GALLERY

This could be the only required new entry, also with spectacular views

E. EXISTING SERVICE ENTRY

Present road and loading dock also service new Gallery

F. CONNECTION TO OIL TANKS

A suspended glass walkway could integrate restored tanks if required

