

20 March 2017

File Number: 2017/136396

Our Ref: R/2015/33/A

Cameron Sargeant, Team Leader, Key Sites Assessments
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
Sydney NSW 2000

Attention: Ben Eveleigh
Email: Ben.Eveleigh@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ben,

State Significant Development Application SSD 7246: Foreshore and Public Domain Works at Campbell's Cove, The Rocks

I refer to your correspondence dated 3 February 2017 inviting Council to make a submission regarding the abovementioned proposal, located at 6A Circular Quay West, The Rocks.

Description

The application seeks development consent for the following:

- a new promenade;
- a new waterfront leisure area and amphitheatre;
- a shared plaza/pedestrian square with reduced land levels, pedestrian circulation and truck access to the new Overseas Passenger Terminal wharf extension; and
- a new east-west connections from Campbell's Cove promenade to Hickson Road and The Rocks.

The City has reviewed the information provided as part of the public exhibition, and has concerns with certain aspects of the proposal. Our concerns require further resolution prior to determination of the application. Detailed information is provided in the following sections.

Land Ownership

A very small portion of land is owned by the City, in the region of the proposed upgraded pedestrian crossing at Hickson Road. While no objection is raised to this component in principle, if these works are to form part of any future SSD approval then land owner's consent is required.

Materials palette

Paving

Campbell's Cove is unique to Sydney and is a significant destination in its own right. The locality is adjacent to a number of buildings of heritage significance, and forms part of Sydney's 'Cultural Ribbon'. Its scale and aspect is distinct from the nearby Circular Quay and Farm Cove, providing a more intimate waterfront experience with a striking view of Sydney Harbour and the Opera House.

The paving palette must respond to both the heritage constraints and landscape setting, celebrating the unique identity of the place. On a detailed scale, the proposed paving design is unnecessarily busy, and between the promenade, plaza and the interpretive shoreline detail, there is a risk of creating visual clutter.

In the City's view, the public domain should be recessive, simple, and designed to provide a forecourt for Campbell's Stores. However, the proposed design creates three separate spaces (building; promenade; and public square) making the space less unified, and creating unnecessary complexity in terms of long-term maintenance.

The City recommends that consideration be given to simplifying the design to better unify the space. Consideration should also be given to replacing the concrete boardwalk with timber to unify the edge of the cove.

Granite materials

Campbell's Cove has a unique architectural character different to the rest of Circular Quay and could be treated as a special precinct with complementary public domain materials. Due to the heritage significance of the locality, granite may not be appropriate as the predominant finish in this particular area.

Notwithstanding this, it is important that Campbell's Cove forms part of a holistic Circular Quay public domain approach. This is consistent with the City's vision for a legible Harbour Walk around the foreshore, as reflected in the SHFA public domain strategy and manual which applies to the area (refer to Attachment A). Whilst not endorsed, this document has been referred to in other developments around the Quay, for instance the Coca Cola Amatil site and associated public domain works, and should be a matter for consideration for this proposal.

In light of the above, while the City considers it acceptable to have a predominantly granite finish around Circular Quay, inflections in the paving of a different colour/texture, should be used to highlight special moments around the Quay, such as this location. Customs House Square is an example of where inflections in the standard city palette have been used to reflect the special nature of the place. It is recommended that inflections at Campbell's Cove could be of a warmer tone to complement the sandstone heritage buildings.

Shoreline interpretation

While the proposed shoreline interpretation is legible when drawn in plan, the City is concerned that it will not be very legible as a built element given that only a small portion of it exists in the open public domain area.

It is recommended that the interpretive shoreline paving detail should be deleted and replaced with bronze inlays, as currently exists in Circular Quay East.

Heritage

If the Consent Authority was to consider granting development consent, consideration should be given to the following mitigation measures to ensure heritage impacts are appropriately ameliorated.

Relocation of cast iron railings and gates

The relocation of the cast iron railing and gates should be subject to a methodology that includes dismantling, numbering/tagging, safe storage and reinstatement. This is to be prepared by a specialist contractor with input from the applicant's heritage consultant, and should be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of works.

Archaeology

As the submitted Draft Archaeological Assessment by Austral Archaeology is only preliminary, the Statement of Heritage Impact of Archaeological Assessment should be updated once detailed design drawings have been prepared. Updates should include the conclusion and recommendations, and an Archaeological Research Design if warranted.

Protection of sea wall

During the works to extend the timber boardwalk, the original seawall is to be adequately protected. There are to be no penetrations into the sea wall.

Heritage interpretation

A Heritage Interpretation Strategy prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced heritage practitioner should be required as a condition of any approval granted. The strategy should address the history and significance of the site, the existing interpretative signs that exist at the site such as those on Custom Officers' Stairs, and be coordinated with the interpretation that is being proposed as part of the Campbell's Stores upgrade.

Levels

The proposal to lower the plaza level in front of Campbell's Stores by 490mm should be treated with caution, as it creates additional risks in the context of future sea level rise.

Current data suggests sea level rise with incidental wave heights (e.g. boat wash, storm surges, etc.) place the plaza at risk sooner than 2100, with water washing over the plaza and onto the buildings. This could have serious and detrimental consequences for the State heritage listed Campbell's Stores.

It is recommended that the proposed levels be reconsidered, and consideration be given to future proofing the site from projected sea level rise.

Trees

Hills Fig Tree

The City is very concerned that the design has not given due consideration to the advice provided in the submitted Arborist's Report.

The City concurs with the findings of the Arborist Report, which outlines the adverse impacts the proposal will have on the tree. We recommend that the area within the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) should remain unchanged to ensure the tree continues to remain viable into the future. We note this tree will be subject to disturbances during the upgrade works to the adjacent building, and therefore it is imperative that this proposal is carried out in a sensitive manner. Accordingly modifications to the garden and grassed area within the 13 metre TPZ for the purpose of footpath widening is not supported.

Palm trees

The palm trees proposed to be removed are a unifying feature around Campbell's Cove and Circular Quay and should be retained. The City objects to their removal.

If re-grading and paving upgrades require their removal, they should be transplanted and repositioned in-situ.

Outdoor dining

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, outdoor dining is proposed to be situated with the new Custom Officer's Stairs. This is not supported, as it privatises what should be an inherently public space. Tables and chairs positioned between the main stair rises are clearly inappropriate and must be deleted from the plans to ensure pedestrian flows are not encumbered in any way.

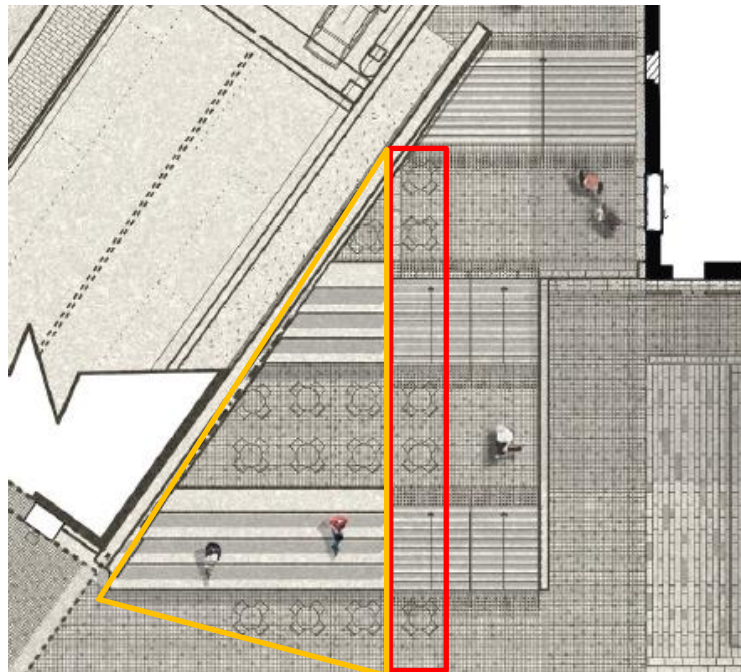


Figure 1: Outdoor dining proposed within the new Custom Officer's Stair. The City recommends that all outdoor dining be removed from the plans. Tables and chairs in the area outlined in red must not be approved under any circumstances.

Transport

Swept Paths

Vehicle swept paths between Hickson Road and the Overseas Passenger Terminal bridge boom gate incorrectly depict vehicles driving on the right hand side of the road. The swept path analysis should be amended to correct this.

We also note that the swept path analysis within the forecourt area does not take into consideration the proposed micro-brewery proposed under SSD 16_7683. While the City strongly opposes and objects to that development, the swept path analysis should take it into consideration nevertheless.

Vehicular access to the foreshore

As a matter of principle, the City does not support vehicular access to the Overseas Passenger Terminal deck extension from Circular Quay West as proposed.

If the Consent Authority was to consider approval, which we do not support, additional information is required regarding the anticipated number of vehicle movements. Additional detail is required, outlining how vehicle movements will be managed to minimise vehicles and to ensure pedestrian safety.

Pedestrian crossing at Overseas Passenger Terminal Bridge

The City notes that a new pedestrian crossing is proposed at the entry to the Overseas Passenger Terminal Bridge from Hickson Road. The City does not support a full crossing at this location as it may contribute to an over proliferation of crossings in the locality, reducing their importance in the mind of the driver, and thereby reducing their efficacy at other, more crucial locations.

The City would prefer vehicular access to be redesigned to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists. This can be achieved by continuing the type of footpath material and grade (i.e. continuous footpath pavement) as recommended in Section 3.11.11 (6) of the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012. The pedestrian has the right of way whether a crossing is there or not, but the different texture from the roadway will reinforce the need for vehicles to 'give way'. It is recommended that the applicant refer to the Sydney Street Design Code for further details.

If the full pedestrian crossing is to be pursued, advice from RMS should be sought to confirm its support.

Signage Strategy

It is recommended that signage should not be approved at this stage. Signage should be included in overall signage strategy as part of a separate application. The strategy should be cohesive with signage proposed as part of the upgrade of Campbell's Stores.

Conclusion

The above assessment has identified significant issues with the design. Accordingly the City is unable to provide recommended conditions of consent at this time.

The City recommends that the application be amended to address the above concerns, and we look forward to providing comments on the amended proposal.

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Christopher Ashworth, Senior Planner, on 9246 7757 or at cashworth@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GJahn', with a large loop at the bottom.

Graham Jahn AM
Director
City Planning | Development | Transport