

28 March 2022

Robert Wilson
Project Director
Mirvac
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RE: Harbourside Shopping Centre Precinct Redevelopment, Darling Harbour

SSD 7874 Stage One Condition Satisfaction (B2) – Heritage Impact Assessment

Dear Robert,

We understand that Mirvac is redeveloping the Harbourside Shopping Centre Precinct in Darling Harbour (the study area) through a Design Excellence Competition (the project). The project was approved by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) and granted State Significant Development (SSD) consent on 25 June 2021 (SSD 7874).

Approval was sought in stages, with Stage 1 works involving the demolition of the existing shopping centre and structures, the southern pedestrian link bridge, monorail infrastructure and tree removal. Final designs were approved in March 2022. The Concept Approval establishes the relevant planning parameters, including building envelopes, maximum Gross Floor Area (GFA) limits, Design Guidelines and a Design Excellence Strategy, and car parking rates to guide the future detailed design, construction, and operation of Harbourside under subsequent SSD applications (SSDAs).

A competitive Architectural Design Competition was held for the project in accordance with Development Consent Conditions A21, A22, and the endorsed Design Excellence Strategy under SSD 7874. Six local and international architectural practices were invited to participate, with the Snøhetta + Hassell scheme being confirmed as the winning entry in December 2021.

Curio Projects Pty Ltd has been commissioned by Mirvac to provide ongoing advice for the project and prepare the required heritage documentation for the site. This letter report assesses impacts associated with amendments to the approved project envelope.

Purpose of this Letter Report

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to meet SSDA Stage 1 Consent Condition B2 regarding visual impacts to the Pyrmont Bridge and modifications to the amended project envelope:

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONCEPT DESIGN

B2. Prior to the lodgement of the first development application, revised concept proposal drawings must be submitted to and approved by the Planning Secretary that will include the following amendments:

- a) An increased set back of at least 15m from the north eastern corner of the podium to the nearest point of Pyrmont Bridge, with the northern edge of the podium angled appropriately to facilitate the connection to the Pyrmont Bridge landing in order to:
 - i. Further reduce the impact of the development on views of the western landing of the bridge; and
 - ii. Ensure that the heritage value of the Pyrmont Bridge can be appreciated from the public domain
- b) An increased setback between the Northern Podium and the western abutment wall sufficient to protect the material and the visual heritage value(s) of Pyrmont Bridge

Statutory Context

The study area is not located in the curtilage of a heritage listed item or Heritage Conservation Area. However, it is situated immediately east of the State significant 'Pyrmont Bridge', which is listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR item no. 01618) and Placemaking NSW s170 Heritage Conservation Register (State Heritage Inventory [SHI] item no. 4500383).

The following statement of significance for the 'Pyrmont Bridge' has been taken from the SHI listing for the item:

Pyrmont Bridge is an item of State heritage significance for its aesthetic, historical and scientific cultural values. An essential link between the city and the inner western suburbs, Pyrmont Bridge is closely associated with the economic and social development of Sydney at the end of the 19th century.

Pyrmont Bridge is closely associated with Percy Allen, PWD Engineer-in-Chief of bridge design, who was responsible for the introduction of American timber bridge practice to NSW and designed over 500 bridges in NSW. The quality of the carved stonework of the piers and portals added to the aesthetic appeal of the bridge.

At the time of construction the swing span of Pyrmont Bridge was one of the largest in the world. It was one of the first swing bridges to be powered by electricity. The timber approach spans demonstrate a rare example of deck type Allan trusses; there being no other known example. The bridge's Australian design and technological innovation was a source of pride for the people of NSW.

Despite the demolition of the eastern approach to the bridge and the construction of the mono-rail track, Pyrmont Bridge retains its essential heritage values.¹

¹ NSW Heritage, SH, s170 listing for the Pyrmont Bridge accessed on 25/03/2022 at: <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=4500383>

Proposed Amended Envelope

The proposed amended envelope (right), in comparison to the approved envelope (left), is presented in Figure 1 to Figure 14 below. It includes an increased setback of 15 metres from the Pyrmont Bridge and reduced bulk of built elements situated close to the item's western abutment.

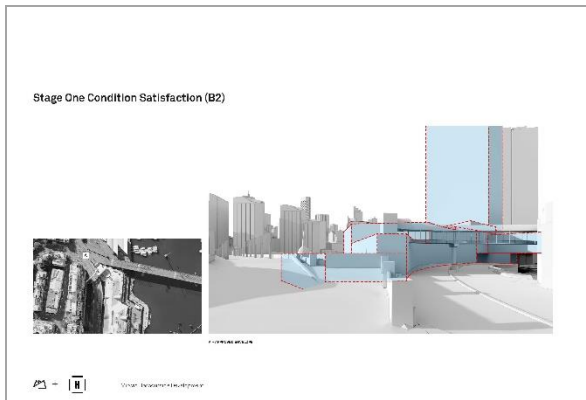


Figure 1. Approved envelope. Source. Snøhetta.



Figure 2. Proposed amended envelope. Source. Snøhetta

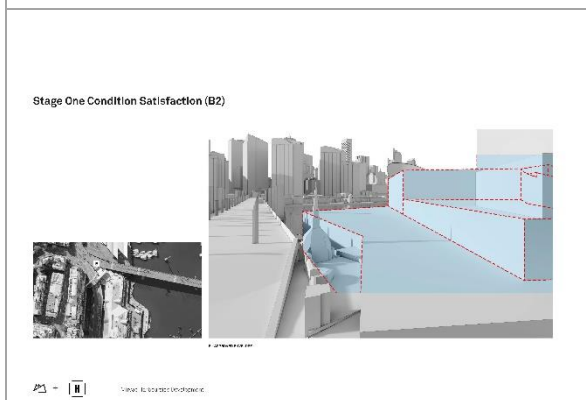


Figure 3. Approved envelope. Source. Snøhetta.

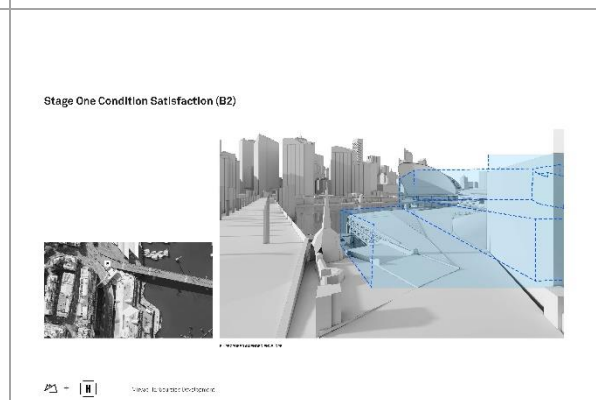
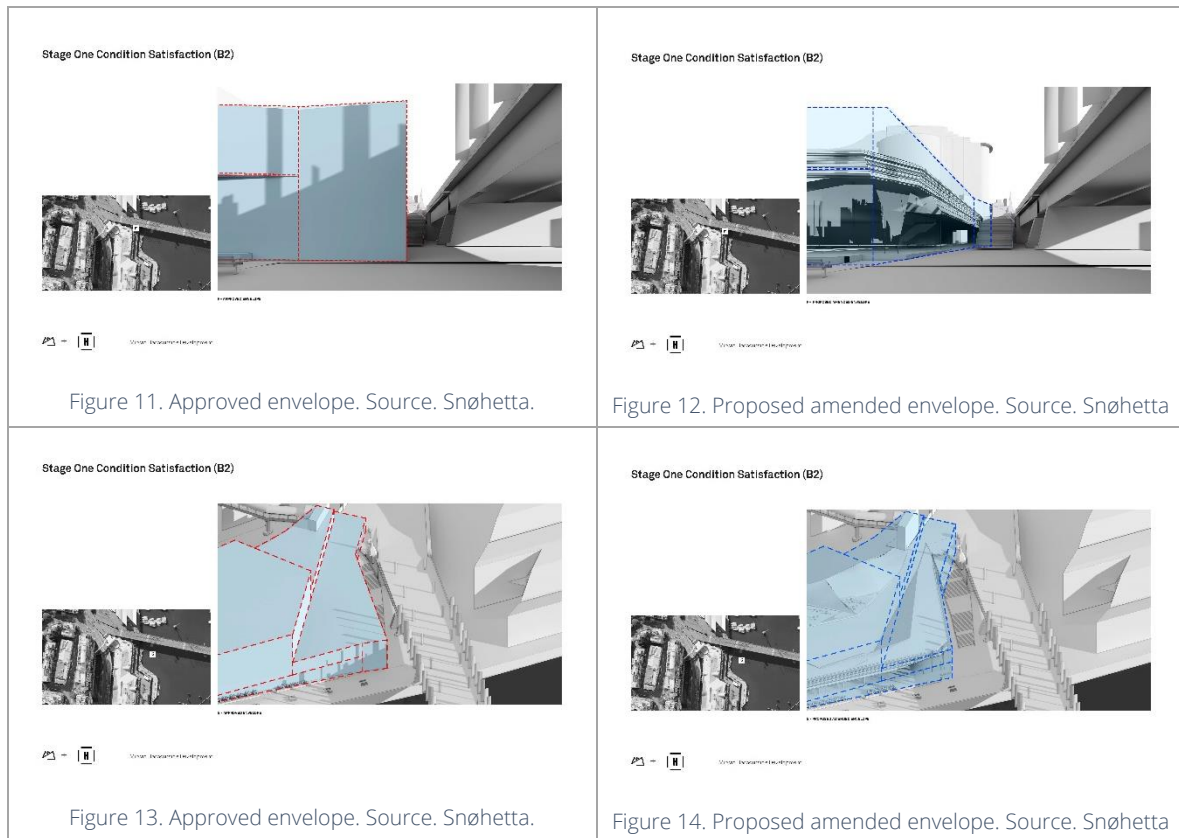


Figure 4. Proposed amended envelope. Source. Snøhetta



Heritage Impact Assessment

Curio have reviewed the proposed amendments to the project envelope and have assessed, that from a heritage perspective, the increased setback from the Pyrmont Bridge, including the increased angle, will have an improved impact (both physical and visual) on the setting, surrounds and views to and from the heritage-listed bridge and its approaches.

Views of western landing of Pyrmont Bridge

More specifically, views towards the western landing of the Pyrmont Bridge as shown in Figure 3 - Figure 6 and Figure 9 - Figure 12, have been considerably improved by the proposed amended envelope through the reduction in bulk and form of the Northern Podium and development as a whole. These changes are sympathetic to the Pyrmont Bridge, its setting, its fabric and its significance.

Protection of material and visual heritage values of the Pyrmont Bridge

The visual and physical heritage values of the bridge, as summarised in its SHR listing, relate directly to its design, carved stonework, swing span, timber approach spans, deck and the direct link it offers from the City to Sydney's inner western suburbs.² The proposed amended envelope respects these elements and visual heritage values by increasing the distance between the project footprint and Pyrmont Bridge (Figure 13 and Figure 14), and ensuring significant fabric associated with the item is respected and retained.

Heritage value and appreciation of Pyrmont Bridge

The increased setback will improve the public's appreciation of the bridge from various vantage points in Darling Harbour, and create a larger area along the western span of the item for passive and active engagement with its fabric, form, history and place in the overall landscape.

Statement of Heritage Impact

The NSW Heritage Office *Statement of Heritage Impact Guidelines* 2002³ offer a series of questions to consider when assessing the potential impact to heritage items.

Table 1: Statement of Heritage Impact Guidelines

Proposed Change to Heritage Item	Relevant Questions	Response
New development adjacent to a heritage item	<i>How is the impact of the new development on the heritage significance of the item or area to be minimised?</i>	The proposed amended envelope has minimised impacts to the heritage significance of the item by increasing the setback of the project's approved designs. The proposed amended envelope has also reduced the overall bulk and scale of the project envelope where it sits close to the Pyrmont Bridge, further reducing and potential visual or indirect visual impacts to the item.

² NSW Heritage, SH, s170 listing for the Pyrmont Bridge accessed on 25/03/2022 at: <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=4500383>

³ NSW Heritage Office, 2002, *Statement of Heritage Impact Guidelines*.

Proposed Change to Heritage Item	Relevant Questions	Response
	<i>How does the new development affect views to, and from, the heritage item? What has been done to minimise negative effects?</i>	The proposed amended envelope has been designed to minimise potential negative effects of the development by increasing its setback from the Pymont Bridge, reducing the bulk of structures, and creating a larger public space between the bridge and project footprint. The latter will encourage and accommodate ongoing passive and active relationships between the public, the bridge and the area's vibrant and dynamic character.
	<i>Is the new development sympathetic to the heritage item? In what way (e.g. Form, siting, proportions, design)?</i>	Yes. The proposed amended project envelope has been designed to sit subtly within the historic character of the surrounding area, with its amended form and proportions respectful to the Pymont Bridge and its setting.
	<i>Will the public, and users of the item, still be able to view and appreciate its significance?</i>	Yes. The proposed amended envelope will enhance the study area and allow for greater public appreciation and enjoyment of the Pymont Bridge thanks primarily to its increased setback from the item.

Conclusions

In summary, it is considered that the amended project envelope and increased setback, as shown in Figures 4-14 meets with the heritage objectives and requirements of Condition B2 and is, therefore, supported.

Should you have any additional questions, or require any additional information with respect to this heritage letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Vinton
CEO
Curio Projects Pty Ltd.