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November 19, 2016

Director, Key Sites Assessments
Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Facsimile 02 9228 6455

Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for the letter from Cameron Sargent, Team Leader of your Key Sites Assessments dated October 19, regarding a proposal by the Sydney Opera House (SSD 78881) to install removable bollards and umbrellas in the northern foyer, create a new function centre and kitchen, and make a number of other alterations (described in your letter).

I would like to oppose the proposed alterations in the strongest possible terms. Already the Opera House constitutes an extremely noisy set of venues to its neighbours. It is only 600 metres across the water from my apartment and I am sure that I do not have to tell you that noise travels extremely well across water. When concerts are on in the northern foyer, I am unable to read or watch television in my (south facing) lounge because of the noise. I had blinds installed to ameliorate this problem, but while the noise is now less, I still cannot use my lounge when concerts are on in the southern foyer, and frequently when functions are being held in the northern foyer. If the music involves a high level of bass, I can feel my apartment vibrating with the music.

I can, and I do retreat to my master bedroom, but that has a small recessed window facing the Opera House and so the noise in my bedroom is also such that often I am unable to sleep until the music has stopped. This is already an extremely uncomfortable situation for me, and the Opera House's request to assault my senses from a greater number of venues and with what will probably be greater frequency seems to me to be highly unfair.

If this were a private application, I am sure that the Planning and Environment Department would not think twice about rejecting it on the basis that the opportunity of neighbours to enjoy their properties would be severely diminished by this proposal. I see no reason why this proposal which will cause severe noise disruption to a large number of neighbours because of the location of the Opera House should be approved merely because it is from a not for profit body. Indeed, that would seem to me to argue even more strongly for rejection of the proposal. The Opera House is a World Heritage listed site and has the most wonderful lines. To have that magnificent building's lines ruined by vulgar commerciality would surely have Utzon turning in his grave. While this is not the primary basis of my objection, I do believe that the City would be a lot better served by not further bastardizing such an iconic symbol.

The final point that I would make is that these problems would be bad enough if the Opera House were a good neighbour. For example, it would help if one could ring up the Opera House and ask that the noise be reduced. One cannot (or if one can, I have not managed to find the magic key to

doing so). Not only is the Opera House totally unresponsive when its noise is untenable for nearby residents, it is also totally unresponsive afterwards. To illustrate my point, I am attaching a letter that I wrote to the CEO of the Opera House about this time last year, requesting that noise levels be reduced to those that were tolerable to its neighbours. I did not receive the courtesy of a reply.

There is no need for the Opera House to expand its footprint over this iconic site. There is plenty of space within the building and to “sweat the assets” at the expense of the neighbourhood’s amenity makes no sense whatsoever. Not only is the cost to others high, the benefits over the Opera’s House’s existing facilities are totally marginal.

I strongly encourage you to reject this proposal. Obviously, I would be happy to discuss these objections with you if it would be useful.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully

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November 15, 2015

Ms Louise Herron AM
Chief Executive Officer
Sydney Opera House
GPO Box 4274
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Ms Herron

I am writing to you to complain about the noise emanating from the south forecourt of the Sydney Opera House during the past week. I live in Kirribilli at the above address and the noise across the Harbour has been quite distressing. The stage in the south forecourt of the Opera House is directly opposite my apartment, as illustrated in the first attached photograph (taken from my apartment).

This problem has occurred before and I have had blinds installed in my living room which faces towards the Harbour (even though the blinds obviously obstruct my view of the Harbour). They do partially ameliorate the noise, but not to the extent that I do not have to retreat to my bedroom. Even in my bedroom, the noise is extreme. The noise is funnelled between 61 Kirribilli Avenue and 63 Kirribilli Avenue directly towards my bedroom window, as illustrated by the second photo attached. I have wooden slatted shutters and if I close my bedroom window and these shutters that also reduces the noise coming across the Harbour. However, even then, I am unable to read, and it is difficult to go to sleep before the music finishes.

I am afraid that I am a bit at the end of my tether. I hate to think what Jan Utzon would think to see the beautiful clean lines of his Opera House, a World Heritage site, destroyed by cheap and nasty temporary stages and marquees, but that is not the source of my immediate concern.

I thought that the best and most polite approach would be to approach the Opera House directly to see if we could reach some agreement about how to reduce the negative effects that the Opera House is having on the amenity of the neighbourhood. That is clearly much preferable to me having to go to the effort and cost of starting a grass roots campaign around Kirribilli and to harness the appropriate regulatory and legal channels to seek redress.

I look forward to hearing from you and would be grateful if you could provide my acknowledgement of the receipt of this letter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully

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