



PCU068259

20 November 2016

Planning Services
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Director Key Sites Assessments Fax 02-9228 6455

Not working!

**APPLICATION NO SSD 16-7881 SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE TRUST
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE FUNCTION CENTRE AND RELATED WORKS**

CONDITIONAL OBJECTION

Over the last decade or even longer and especially during the summer months, functions for the most part in and around the marquee at the northern (Benelong) point on private lease from the Opera House Trust and Administration (Events) have ranged from wedding receptions to concerts of different kinds – and up to 11pm and in some cases well beyond.

Too many of these events have been contentious by reason of their noise levels – music especially of the percussive kind, chanteuses of meagre talent – projected across the narrow harbour gap to be audible even within closed doors and windows of residences on the opposite shore and up to the top of the ridge. Indeed the most recent instance, and confirmed, was Saturday night, 19 November 2016 – a wedding reception in the marquee from 5pm to past midnight.

After many written complaints, Sydney Opera House instituted criteria for maximum decibels and in preparations for the same conducted audio tests. It is assumed that these guidelines were provided in writing to hirers as a matter of course.

The trouble has been that private guests often flouted these requirements, in the apparent belief that a contract or lease gave licence for the antisocial behaviour described above, with no evidence that penalties were imposed – penalties that if paid would have added to Opera House revenue, the very point of the marquee operation.

The fault has lain with failure of the Opera House to guarantee adequate social management. But it lies the more so with the behaviour of hirers who think that it is OK in a densely populated part of the city to behave like the Muhajers.

The feasibility of intrusion in future is indicated by the reference in description of the works (**dot point 3**) to “**removable bollards and umbrellas in the northern broadwalk** (that is, outside) **for function-related events**” (emphasis added). That seems to allow that obstructions will be removed so that function-related events can be held on the northern broadwalk – i.e. outside. What else can it mean?

Dot point 5 proposes that the rehearsal room be relocated to the south-eastern side of the building – i.e., facing Farm Cove. This is stated to be “temporary”. The question might be asked: “how long is temporary?” and “what is the long-term resolution to meet the needs for rehearsals?”

The Opera House is for the most part a publicly (taxpayer) funded venue for the Performing Arts, not a nightclub.

In sum, the grounds of Objection are subject to clarification of the discernible ambiguity, and which leaves opportunity for continued open-air noise intrusion over the extended area mentioned above.

If the proposal is to do away with marquee events altogether and have such contained totally indoors in renovated facilities, this would seem to overcome the social delinquency aspects of the past. In that context, on the proviso that the same is a correct interpretation of the proposed works, no reasonable person would object. The Opera Houses is entitled to raise revenue.

However the proposal is to provide infrastructure not only for services inside but to cater for extension outside onto the northern (or southern, for that matter) concourse, and in that case, the anti-social problems are not remedied – and against that eventuality, this objection is lodged.

I would prefer that my details not be published, though I can be contacted in business hours on [redacted] and would appreciate in due course acknowledgement of receipt of this letter.

No donations or gifts of any kind have been made by me in the last two years or ever. In fact, the irritants prompting this letter have been so frequent, and over so long a period, what incentive is there?

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

Department of Planning
23 NOV 2016
Scanning Room