



Mr David McNamara  
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Dear David

**RE: Sydney Opera House Building Renewal Program – Concert Hall Upgrade and new Creative Learning Centre (SSD 8863)**

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As agreed, I am providing a list of points arising from the site visit and meeting on 11 December 2018 with the Sydney Opera House (SOH) with a sub-committee of the Heritage Council of NSW (Gary Sturgess, Stephen Davies, Bruce Pettman and myself) in relation to the above SSD application.

The sub-committee acknowledged at this meeting that the proposed works are principally essential interventions to address disability access, acoustic performance and community facilities. They noted that the works will have significant physical and visual impacts to the SOH.

The following key issues were discussed.

1. Impact of accessibility works (physical, spatial and visual) in the Concert Hall foyer spaces and any collateral works affected by this including:
  - The proposed lower concrete surround of the lifts is bulky, but the members accepted there was no realistic alternative given the changes in levels and the structural support requirements. The quality of the finishes will be critical to the management of the impact.
  - SOH should identify what is to be retained, demolished and reused from the stairs impacted by the cutting to access the lifts. As much of the original material of the stairs should be retained as possible including maximising reuse of original material.
  - Cutting into the stairs is a major physical intervention but it was acknowledged that the original Utzon design had a tunnel near this location.

2. Aesthetic impacts of the acoustic upgrade to the Peter Hall interior of Concert Hall (physical and visual) and integrity of the Concert Hall finishes and forms in the 'at rest' mode (visual).
  - Generally, the members were satisfied with the effort to manage the impact of very significant changes to the Concert Hall to improve its acoustics. The quality of the finishes will again be critical to the management of this impact. Also, where possible, new acoustic finishes or amended surfaces should overlay original material and forms. Future changes in acoustics technology may enable original forms and surfaces to be exposed once more at a later date.
  - The documentation should show and graphically illustrate, the various operational modes of the space to indicate the visual impacts of each mode (including at rest). This should also confirm that the 'at rest mode' clearly enables direct vision of the organ and pipes ensemble, the folded and domed ceiling forms and the timber finishes which were significant Peter Hall design elements.
3. Extent of legibility of original forms and reversal of previous interventions in forming the new Creative Learning Centre space.
  - A photographic record should be provided of the before and after for the Learning Centre
4. Any archaeological impacts relating to lift base installations should identify the methodology for excavation, and include monitoring of the excavation by an archaeologist, recording of anything uncovered and the retention of as much as possible in-situ. This will ensure the proactive management and acknowledgement of any significant archaeology.
5. Reversibility and reinstatement generally
  - Degrees of reversibility and reinstatement should be integrated where possible rather than total replacement.
  - To assist in this process, the SOH should clarify the extent of the minimum demolition required and identify areas where careful dismantling and reinstatement can occur and where replacement of significant fabric is the last resort.
6. A concise summary should be provided of why the changes are happening and the degree of intervention to the items being disturbed.

It was acknowledged at the meeting that there will be a need to work collaboratively through the ongoing detailed design of the proposed works to mitigate the key visual, spatial and physical impacts. This will require exceptional design quality resolution and execution with continuity of existing finishes, forms and materials emphasising the importance of keeping the consistency for high quality interior design.

This assessment of the proposed works on the SOH State heritage values will be considered at the Heritage Council's 6 February 2019 meeting which will be the first meeting of the newly reconstituted council following significant membership changes. Following this meeting, a formal response will be issued to DPE, which we understand will be provided to SOH for response.

If you have any further enquiries, please contact David Nix, Senior Heritage Officer, at the Heritage Division on 9895 6523 or at david.nix@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pauline McKenzie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Pauline McKenzie**  
**Executive Director**  
Heritage Division  
Office of Environment and Heritage  
**As Delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW**  
Date: 20 December 2018