



**TOWER 2, LEVEL 23
DARLING PARK, 201 SUSSEX ST
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

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Urbis Pty Ltd
ABN 50 105 256 228

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Ellen Mannix
Planning Officer, Key Sites Assessment
NSW Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ellen,

SSD 8687 HARBOUR ROCKS HOTEL, 34-52 HARRINGTON STREET, THE ROCKS

Urbis Heritage completed the Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) for the proposed works at the Harbour Rocks Hotel (HRH) in February 2018. The HIS included a detailed history of the site, the current heritage legislation covering the site and an impact assessment of the proposed works on the heritage significance of the site. The HIS concluded that the proposed works would have an acceptable heritage impact, and when balanced with the proposed conservation works, provide a positive heritage outcome for the building and the associated activation of heritage spaces.

I have provided direct heritage and design advice for the works, including the proposed additional openings and the replacement deck with self-supporting canopy.

I understand there remains some contention regarding the heritage impact of the works, in particular the proposed canopy and to a lesser extent, the additional internal openings.

The table below outlines the main elements of the proposed works, including conservation works to be undertaken as part of the modifications, and heritage impact discussion.

Table 1 – Proposal Elements

Element	Discussion
Canopy	The existing rear deck, constructed during the 1980s, is weathered and not suited to current use of dining. The existing use of umbrellas is considered both intrusive and poor weather protection. In principle, the replacement of the deck is agreed, however concerns remain that the proposed canopy will have an unacceptable visual heritage impact on Nurses Walk, and to a lesser degree on the building itself.

Element	Discussion
	The draped and ultra-thin profile of the canopy has been specifically designed to have minimal heritage impact through reducing bulk and creating a structure which presents as very light-weight. The material chosen, glass bead blasted stainless steel sheets provide a somewhat luminescent and floating appearance. The cantilevered fixings to the building ensure a traditional canopy floating above the deck with no upright structural members to the outer edge of the deck. The above design elements have been carefully selected to ensure the proposed works enhance the experience for patrons during mornings and light to moderate showers, with an attractive and appropriately scaled structure. The heritage impact on Nurses Walk and the Harbour Rocks Hotel is negligible.
Additional Internal Openings	The reversible creation (via detailed methodology) of the two additional openings in the lower bays, while relocating some original fabric, would promote the use of the site within a commercial framework and introduce a greater appreciation of the significant heritage spaces. The significance of these bays is to understand the warehouse structure and how the building was originally configured, this will be further enhanced through an interpretation strategy (see below). It is considered that the making of the two openings does not reduce an amount of original material that would diminish an understanding of the manner in which the building was designed and operated. The option of not creating the additional openings was considered, however the recent history of the site demonstrates why this restricts the accessibility of the spaces. The separation of the bays, along with the different floor heights of the upper and lower bays has isolated the lower bays, particularly lower bays 2, 3 and 4. I understand there have been several diverse business ventures across these isolated bays which have proven to be unsuccessful in the longer term. While not creating the

Element	Discussion
	openings would result in no change to the heritage fabric, doing so would also result in no change to the appreciation and use of the high significance heritage spaces contained within. Furthermore, the openings would be created by an experienced heritage stonemason. To ensure reversibility, the blocks to be removed would be carefully extracted from the sandstone course and spaces filled with new stone. The removed stone blocks would remain on site.
Revealing existing archways	The earlier openings and details are to be restored on the upper level of the bays with the removal of a substantial amount of intrusive materials. This will allow to reveal the original arcade on the upper bays, two of which are concealed by cladding and for the separation of the commercial kitchen facilities. The removal of this would open the kitchen facilities and allow the public to move within three of the upper bays through these impressive original arches.
Conservation Works	Place Management NSW identified additional conservation works to be undertaken as part of the proposed development. These works primarily relate to damp related issues impacting the sandstone. A Heritage Engineer has been to site and will be involved in providing a detailed survey and solution to these issues.
Heritage Interpretation	As part of the proposed development, Place Management NSW have requested a Heritage Interpretation Strategy to be developed for the basement area of the Harbour Rocks Hotel. While this is currently being developed, it is envisaged to include interpretation of the original uses of the basement and layout, previous materials, including an earlier suspended floor and stair cases leading to the Ground Floor. The Heritage Interpretation Strategy is envisaged to be of a practical nature based on historic images of the site and will not solely rely on information plaques.



On balance, the proposed works are supported by me on heritage grounds. The Rocks is Sydney's most prominent heritage area and the subject site is a handsome and significant heritage building.

The increase in accessibility of the significant basement area of the Harbour Rocks Hotel (by having a viable business operating from within) allows for a greater appreciation of the heritage significance of the basement space, the overall building and the broader area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Davies", followed by a comma.

Stephen Davies
Director Heritage