

18 December 2018

Ellen Mannix  
Senior Planning Officer Key  
Sites Assessments

Via email –  
[ellen.mannix@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ellen.mannix@planning.nsw.gov.au)

RE: AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM - ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS  
SSD 9452

Dear Ellen,

On 22 October 2018, the Department of Planning and Environment requested the Government Architect NSW (GANSW) provide an independent design review of the Australian Museum (AM) Alterations and Additions (SSD 9452). In conducting the review, GANSW has considered the EIS prepared by Ethos Urban, dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (including its appendices), as well as the advice previously provided to the proponent through the State Design Review Panel (SDRP) which is chaired by GANSW.

We make the following comments on the proposal and reiterate issues to be still addressed as raised in the SDRP advice letters issued on 29 May, 30 August, and 20 September 2018 (attached):

1. Relationship to AM masterplan

GANSW maintains its concerns regarding the current AM masterplan as per our advice through the SDRP. This extends to the relationship of the Stage 1 works and their contribution to a future vision for the Museum's expansion on the site which remains unclear.

We nominally support and acknowledge that the proposed Phase 1 works will not impede the future procurement of a revised masterplan. However, we recommend alterations to the existing Museum fabric are carefully considered to improve the current facility for the long-term and avoid works that are likely to require further alterations and/or demolition to make way for a holistic and coordinated masterplan vision that should be delivered through a Design Excellence competition and ongoing process.

2. Design Excellence

GANSW notes that the response to design excellence in the EIS does not refer to or provide sufficient detail of the interior architecture of the

proposal (including its materials, details, lighting, integration and alterations of building services) which represents a major component of this public project.

In SDRP advice letter dated 30/08/18, GANSW recommended this information be provided with the Development Application through interior elevations, reflected ceilings plans and detailed visualisations.

We recommend further design review of the proposal is undertaken through the SDRP pilot program during the design development and construction process to ensure design excellence is achieved for the interior as well as the exterior of this important public building.

In relation to project procurement (as noted p.33 of the EIS), GANSW requests the proponent submit details confirming how the original architects of the Crystal Hall will be involved in the ongoing design development and construction documentation of the project through some form of agreement, schedule of works or Terms of Reference.

### 3. Heritage

GANSW raises concern that the new secondary groups entry to William Street, compromises the architectural integrity of the Parkes Farmer wing through –

1. the new stair location;
2. the demolition of part of the sandstone façade to create a new door opening, disrupting the regular window pattern.

Given that the progression of Phase 2 works is unconfirmed, the Phase 1 works should be considered as permanent for some time. We are concerned that the configuration and architectural detailing of the new stair structure, will appear as another adhoc and temporary alteration and addition, and will detract from the William Street façade in a similar manner to the Crystal Hall entry ramp, as has been noted by the SDRP panel.

Refer to related comments under ‘William Street Entry’ and ‘Visual Impact’.

### 4. William Street Entry

The proposed groups entry to William Street does not provide equitable access befitting its intended function (refer SDRP advice letter dated 20/09/18 p.3), nor demonstrate sufficient queuing space on the new outdoor stair landing. In the proposed scenario, group members that are unable to use the stairs, will be required to enter separately through the small new door to the basement level foyer in order to use the lift. However, in the plan drawing, compliant doorway clearances are not shown and the yellow shading indicating the ‘Public Foyer’ does not extend to the lift. Further information should be sought for the design of

this entry and foyer to ensure equitable access can be achieved alongside sensitive and respectful treatment of the heritage façade. This should include details of existing plant rooms in this area, options for relocating equipment and reconfiguring internal and external stairs, in order to achieve a suitable and consolidated secondary public groups entry at grade for the Museum.

Given the large public budget for the alterations and additions, the value of demolishing and rebuilding a new William Street stair should be reconsidered against the economic and social value of alternative options to create a new accessible level entry. We strongly recommend the design is developed to integrate with the existing architectural expression of the William Street façade, notably the glass infill façade between the Parkers Farmer and Lewis Wings.

GANSW recommends further design review to ensure the performance of the William Street groups entry achieves the above through design excellence for the Phase 1 works.

#### 5. Circulation and Accessibility

While the proposal demonstrates part response to SDRP advice, GANSW advice remains as per previous SDRP advice letters dated 20/09/18 and 30/08/18.

In addition, further information should be provided by the proponent on the specifications, materials, details and integration of the escalators and new lift between the Great Hall and the Basement level touring exhibition spaces, including detailed interior elevations and sections.

#### 6. Loading Dock

The proposal does not demonstrate how the capacity of the existing loading dock facilities are appropriate to service the expanded exhibition area, in a safe, secure and functional manner given the value of the artefacts to be displayed and Work health and safety considerations. As raised in SDRP letter dated 30 August 2018, the existing loading dock was noted to not meet international standards.

#### 7. Visual Impact and Public Domain

The proposal has not demonstrated a response to previous SDRP advice regarding the blank wall to the end of the Crystal Hall extension which was considered as having a negative visual impact on the public domain. There is opportunity for a design response that provides greater street activation and visibility of the Museum interior through the Crystal Hall, and greater views from the interior of the Crystal Hall to its surrounding context along William Street.

As noted above under Heritage, there is concern that the metal cladding, new external stairs and balustrade details visually detract from the integrity of Parkes Farmer heritage building, as visible from the surrounding public domain.

Overall, we recommend a further SDRP session is held to review how the points raised above are being incorporated into the design of the proposal. Should you require clarification of any of the above, please don't hesitate to contact Emma Kirkman.

Sincerely,



Olivia Hyde  
Acting Government Architect NSW

Enclosed:  
SDRP advice letters dated 29 May, 30 August, and 20 September 2018