

**Request for name to be withheld.**

Re SSD-3276623035-75Harrington Street, The Rocks

I object to the proposal in its current form.

My concerns largely relate to:

1. The loss of views and vista from the Cahill Steps (Steps) indicated in the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) due to height increase.

Notably, the Steps are frequently visited public domain by local as well as international visitors which provide a viewing platform that showcases an iconic view that extends from the Sydney Opera House to East Circular Quay (and includes the harbour). This short video indicates the current view:

<http://bit.ly/3zKbjno>

A more intimate view can also be seen from the mid-level. Notably, many of the visuals in the VIA are confusing. For example the Clock Tower on page 77 indicates a mass that has no transparency. Similarly a number of other images in the VIA are considered misleading.

For the purpose of feedback today, samples of current views follow:

- a. The view from the Cahill Steps (midlevel) showing a more intimate view.



## Comments

- While the vista to the Opera House is not impacted by the proposed plans for the 8 + storey building (~ 42 metres), the plans will block the view to East Circular Quay and the harbour in part. In doing so, the plans compromise the largely uninterrupted view that extends from the Sydney Opera House to East Circular Quay.
  - Notably too, the current view is not a flat surface as indicated in the VIA (page 77) that concludes '*the degree of any view loss is minimal*'. Rather the loss of the view when considered in its context is significant. Notably too, this view is different to that from other locations such as from the Cahill Expressway.
- b. The current view from the top of the Cahill Steps (differs in part to that shown in the VIA)



- c. In comparison, what's proposed (massing/proposed envelope courtesy of the VIA, pp 77)  
See over.



Figure 43 Bridge Stairs- view with proposed envelope (yellow outline) and detailed design

#### Further Comments

- d. The London Planes (described in the VIA as '*established vegetation*') shown in the images are about four to five stories tall. Yet it appears no consideration was made in relation to the future of the 'vegetation' aka trees and the visual impact if any changes are made. For Example: it should not be assumed the plane trees will survive over the medium to longer term given their age and the impact from climate change. Instead over time, the trees may need to be replaced, or other species introduced as indicated in the draft City of Sydney Street Tree Masterplan and draft Urban Forest Strategy that has recently been exhibited. While the area is under the management of Place Management NSW for the Crown, the City's (draft) urban tree strategy or the like may be relevant when considering view lines and vistas.
- e. The Variation Request indicates the height increase is to afford the inclusion of the additional top storey, i.e. the bar, pool, entertainment area, with the report noting that the application is designed to '*enhance views of the harbour for visitors to the hotel*'.

At the same time, the longstanding public views from the Cahill Steps will be impeded. This seems contrary to the greater public interest.

2. The desktop Geotechnical Report indicates it is intended for this application (for a hotel) to be connected to the existing Rendezvous Hotel at 75 Harrington Street for the purpose of becoming one hotel, with the hotel rebranded 'The Quincy Hotel' with a separate application to follow. The Variation Request indicates the same. This is not well understood in the EIS. Whereas other reports indicate the hotels will remain separated. Nonetheless, the cumulative impact from the plans should be understood by the public as part of the exhibition process, and for the application to be considered.

3. The Geological Report is a desktop report only. Further studies should be undertaken and made available as part of the exhibition process particularly given intrusive investigations have not yet been undertaken, despite an area in close proximity to the eastern site boundary being mapped as 'disturbed terrain'.

While the report notes that a number of investigations have been undertaken in nearby sites, this should not satisfy the necessary requirements, particularly given the report also suggests that excavation of approximately 0.4 m depth in the basement may be necessary to make a "flat-floor" basement from the existing split-level basement with deeper excavations expected at footing locations and lift pits.

Moreover given the strength of the sandstone bedrock is unknown, excavation through low strength or stronger sandstone may require heavy ripping equipment and/or rock hammers for effective removal.

Further, the report indicates the use of heavy ripping equipment and/or rock has the potential to impact not only the site but also heritage buildings such as nearby state heritage listed Susannah Place.

Notably too, the absence of detailed investigations as part of the assessment process has the potential to increase the risks. This prompts concerns given factors such as when the SSD for the Opal Building was considered, the DPE relied on further investigations that were later not undertaken.

4. More information is necessary for the purpose of defining construction management, and traffic movements.

## **Conclusion**

The loss of the views from the Cahill Steps due to the height increase is not insignificant. Moreover, before any decision is taken, the VIA should be independently reviewed, given the loss is not significant. An independent review would also avoid any perceived conflict of interest given the DPE is the consent authority and the landholding government land. Any such review should also include a view of the vistas in person rather than rely on camera and video images.

In addition, the future plans to potentially 'merge' the sites should be made available, and geotechnical investigations undertaken, with the findings made available as part of the exhibition process.

## **Request**

There are a number of concerns in relation to other reports. To this end, it would be appreciated, if the opportunity to make a subsequent addendum could be considered.

## **Other Statements**

- I have not made any contribution to any political parties.
- I request my name / details be withheld.