

## **Submission on planning proposals for buildings C3 and C5**

To Whom it may concern

I am writing to make a submission on the planning proposals for buildings C3 and C5. As they share a large number of traits I will discuss both buildings in the one submission and submit the same document on both. As a City of Sydney Councillor I have come into contact with many members of the community concerned about aspects of the Barangaroo development and I therefore write the below submission on behalf of myself and numerous members of my constituency.

### **Building size and population**

The size of the buildings, and the worker populations that they will accommodate, is of significant concern, particularly from a transport perspective. While the high mode share allocated to public transport is admirable there is simply not the capacity on the network to bring all these people into and out of the City at peak hour.

Should C3 and C5 go ahead as proposed, and the intended mode share targets are realised, the cumulative effect of these, along with the already approved C4 building, would add a total of 9102 train passengers to peak hour trains into the City every day. This is equivalent to seven and a half extra trains, at full capacity, entering the City each morning and leaving each evening, something which the rail network currently doesn't have the capacity to deliver.

A similar situation is evident with buses – an additional 48 non-articulated buses at full capacity would be required to convey the estimated 2809 daily passengers these buildings would bring in. The barely moving cues of buses that line up every morning on the Harbour Bridge, Victoria Rd and Parramatta Rd are testament to the fact that there is little capacity to provide these extra buses.

On top of the extra demand for public transport that these buildings create there will also be further transport demand created by other aspects of Barangaroo that have been suggested but not yet planned for. The BDA predicts that once complete 33 000 people will visit Barangaroo everyday, in addition to the precinct's 23 000 workers and residents. While one imagines that the arrival of these visitors will be more evenly distributed throughout the day it seems likely that a few thousand of them will use crowded peak hour services along with Barangaroo's workers, further increasing demand on the public transport system in a way that no planning document so far produced seems to have accounted for.

While the proposal for demand management measures to be implemented in each building is welcome such measures will fall far short of alleviating the capacity issues discussed above.

Therefore, to prevent paralysing central Sydney's roads and public transport it is imperative that these buildings are either reduced in scale, have their usage changed to be partially residential or have their construction made contingent on the provision of (not simply the proposal of) significant additional transport capacity. Such capacity could include the Sussex St light rail extension often mentioned by the BDA, a

submerged light rail route linking the site to Balmain (avoiding passing through congested CBD routes, as proposed by Ecotransit Sydney at [http://www.ecotransit.org.au/ets/whitebay\\_greenlink](http://www.ecotransit.org.au/ets/whitebay_greenlink)), an additional heavy rail harbour crossing or, ideally, some combination of all three of these and a range of others.

### **Lack of architectural diversity**

It has been claimed by the BDA on numerous occasions that Barangaroo will set a benchmark for diversity in built form. However the proposals for buildings C3, C4 and C5 as put forward are anything but diverse. The three buildings are copies of a single uninspiring plan with only the barest of differentiation between them.

I note that a design competition is not required for the site's large buildings if they are designed by an architect of outstanding reputation. While an architect of outstanding reputation has certainly been found in Lord Rogers and his associates the buildings as proposed do not do justice to that reputation. The argument that the three buildings will form an "ensemble" simply feels like an excuse for lazy planning.

Architects of the stature of Lord Rogers and associates would have significant capacity to design three buildings that are architecturally diverse whilst still having unifying elements that tied them together as an ensemble. Without this being done there may as well not be a world renowned architect on board and the buildings should therefore be put out to a design competition.

### **Podia**

The inclusion of podia on buildings of this size is essential to provide some moderation to each building's scale. However the case with both buildings is that the podia do not cover all aspects of the building, meaning that the sides missing out present sheer 39 story walls to the adjacent streets.

The proposal as currently stands sees the podia of both buildings being utilised in ways that will add value to the buildings and make a positive social impact on their users. I would therefore urge that the building designs be changed in such a way that podia of some form can be accommodated on all sides of the buildings.

### **Public domain**

It is concerning that much of the public domain proposed to surround C3 and C5 is only intended to be temporary. Members of the public commenting on this proposal have no idea what the final public domain areas may look like and it seems as though the proponents are equally uncertain. Waiting for other, as yet unplanned, developments to take place before finalising the public domain means the final plans for this aspect of the project will be highly constrained by the existing developments.

This is an indictment on the staged way in which the development of the entire Barangaroo project is taking place. All aspects of the project, including the public domain areas of Barangaroo South, should be planned before anything but the most basic elements of construction start.

To do otherwise not only prevents optimal outcomes further on in the process but creates the very real risk of double handling and waste adding to the cost of the project. There will be labour expenses involved in building the temporary public domain, then further such expenses in dismantling it and rebuilding the new public domain once plans are finalised.

While I understand that the proponents intend to recycle materials between iterations of the public domain it is likely that a certain proportion of elements, like the proposed granite pavers, may not be reusable due to the need for them to be cut into shape or due to damage incurred in the course of successive building, demolition and rebuilding works. It may even turn out that many of the materials are not usable in the final public domain depending on the final plan, unless planning for the permanent public domain is further constrained to fit the materials already used. The issue of waste is also relevant to the vegetation that will form part of the public domain as repeated stress will likely cause a large proportion of the plants used to die, another costly and undesirable outcome.

### **Retail activation**

It is admirable that 90% of the street frontages of the two buildings are intended as active retail space. However the plan for the retail premises within the buildings to only trade from 8am-7pm will mean they play little role in activating the precinct outside office hours, which is precisely when activation will be needed the most.

The retail elements of the buildings, the ground floor ones at least, need to be assumed from this early stage to be later opening businesses like restaurants or supermarkets that will attract people (including residents of Barangaroo Central) to the precinct when most office workers are absent. Failure to do this will result in the precinct becoming empty, uninviting and potentially dangerous outside office hours. One only need to look at the CBD of North Sydney to see how undesirable such an outcome is.

It is also disappointing that retail space is being removed to provide extra space for office lobbies. While retail areas provide activation to a site large voluminous lobbies detract from this and contribute nothing but a sense of ostentatiousness.

### **Overshadowing**

The descriptions of the shadow diagrams contain errors that have the potential to lead the public to believe the impacts to be less than they actually are. It is stated on page 96 in the EAR for both C3 and C5 that properties to the west of the site will be overshadowed *“for a short period of time between 9am and 10am in mid winter and on March 21.”*

In actual fact, these properties will be overshadowed from sunrise until sometime between 9am and 10am for a period of the year that begins sometime before March 21<sup>st</sup> and continues for some time after the winter solstice. The author of the EAR has made the mistake of treating the times and dates of the modelling as unique events, when in fact they are simply points on a continuum and between these points

conditions will slowly transition from those of one point to those of the next. This error makes the overshadowing impacts sound less severe than they actually are.

The diagrams also fail to account for the cumulative impacts of C3 and C5 together as the diagrams for one building do not include the shadows of the other. This once again has the effect of leading a casual reader to believe the impacts are less severe than they are.

### **Cumulative impact on views**

In the same vein as the latter point on shadow diagrams, the view analyses fail to account for the cumulative effect of both C3 and C5. While the various photomontages include the location of C4 (as a transparent image) they fail to include an image of what the scene would look like with both C3 and C5 present.

If both C3 and C5 were included in the photomontages, and C4 were included in the same opaque style, the overall impression from many angles would be a solid wall of grey buildings. The overall appearance would be very uninspiring and would serve to reinforce the need for diversity between the three.

### **Greenhouse gas reduction targets**

The statement in the EAR that each building will reduce its net greenhouse gas emissions through the purchase of 20% of its energy needs from offsite renewable sources is weak and runs contrary to the statement that Barangaroo will produce more renewable energy onsite than it consumes (<http://barangaroo.com.au/discover-barangaroo/sustainability.aspx>).

Apart from vague references to photovoltaic panels being used on the buildings there is no indication given as to how the goal of 100%+ onsite renewable energy generation will be achieved and the plan to purchase energy from offsite implies that the proponents don't intend to reach this goal.

A commitment should be made, at the very least, to purchasing 100% of the site's energy needs from renewable sources. However as a "from scratch" development being overseen by a dedicated government authority Barangaroo has the potential to be built in a way that allows it to meet its stated goal of generating renewable energy onsite. This would be a far better option for meeting the sites energy needs sustainably than simply purchasing clean energy from offsite, which is subject to the vagaries of future site management and the renewable energy market.

### **Fate of materials to go to Headland Park**

The EARs for both C3 and C5 note that excavated material will be used to form the headland park, but that this is subject to a separate approval. This raises another issue with the staging of the project as it is unclear what will be done with excavated material should it be dug up prior to this approval being finalised. This would create a situation in which material will need to end up being stockpiled, requiring a place to be found on or off site to do this and resulting in more double handling.

If material excavated during the construction of these buildings and other parts of Barangaroo is to be reused in the headland park approval for this should be finalised and work should be ready to begin before excavation commences.

## **Signage**

Greater detail should be given as to what type of signage is to be included on the building facades. Appropriate permanent signage can add to a building's appeal and help a precinct develop a unique and iconic identity. The wrong signage, such as temporary billboard space, can have the entirely opposite affect. Details of what type of signage is to be permitted should be made available as part of the approval process.

## **Plantings**

The idea of external planting beds on parts of the building façade as well as plantings on top of the podia are most worthwhile, as is the proposal to capture stormwater to water these. I suggest that the external planting beds be expanded to cover all sides of the buildings – possibly balconies could also be added to all sides but not doing this shouldn't preclude an expanded planting regime.

Plants on a building's external façade help shade and keep cool the building's occupants (reducing air conditioning costs) and can also provide the building with a unique visual appeal – a nearby example of this can be seen on the corner of York and Jamison streets where balcony plantings hang down towards street level, making the building well known to everyone who travels by bus to Wynyard from Sydney's north. An extensive schedule of plantings could easily and cheaply mitigate the bland visual impression that the building's built form, as currently proposed, presents.

Thank you for taking the time to read what I have said here. I hope you will be able to take my comments into consideration when deciding whether or not to approve these projects in the forms currently proposed.

Should you wish to discuss any of the matters I have raised here further feel free to contact me on 9265 9812.

Regards

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City of Sydney Council