

6 December 2019

Secretary, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Betts,

Major Project: Opera House Lower Concourse Works and Use (Application Number SSD-9794)

We object to the works proposed to the Lower Concourse of the Sydney Opera House under State significant development application SSD-9794 due to the likely impacts on the amenity of surrounding residents and public safety risks.

Likely Noise Impacts

At present noise from amplified music, particularly distorted low and high pitch sounds, is not only audible within the habitable rooms of Bennelong Apartments with the doors and windows closed but is often offensive. The proposed development will exacerbate this.

Amplified music is currently performed on the stage at the southern end of the Opera Bar which has a vertical noise barrier behind it. This barrier was originally put in place at the direction of Mr John Symond and the Board of the Sydney Opera House Trust due to concerns over excessive noise levels and the impact on residents. If this barrier is removed it should be replaced with more suitable noise attenuation measures.

It is not only the volume of music that needs to be controlled but the type of music played, with consideration also given to prevailing weather conditions.

An outdoor night club style of venue positioned in what is effectively a concrete bowl which reverberates loud amplified sounds into sensitive residential receivers will be a continual source of conflict. An opportunity exists for the Opera Bar to become a high-quality acoustic live music venue more consistent with the role and iconic status of the Opera House. Acoustic instruments such as piano, guitars, double bass (excluding drums, cymbals or similar percussion instruments and noisy woodwind instruments such as a saxophone, trumpet, tuba and the like) are unlikely to interrupt the quiet enjoyment of surrounding residents.

Operators of the Opera Bar have a history of non-compliance with their conditions of consent relating to noise restrictions, and their complaint handling procedures are woefully inadequate and ineffective. The

proponent must provide more effective noise controls and the regulatory authority should also increase its vigilance and issuance of penalties for continued breaches.

16 New Umbrella Structures

Acoustic treatments such as sound absorbing materials or baffles should be integrated into the design of the umbrellas to minimise noise impacts on surrounding residents.

The volume of the music played through the speakers needs to be physically restricted at the source, so it is not possible for different people to adjust the music to create offensive noise, near and distant.

Public Safety

Noise levels at the Opera Bar are loud and should be restricted to ensure safe passage of all patrons, including children, to the Opera House car park.

Past experience has shown that when live bands play, the walkways around the Opera Bar become clogged with people congregating and dancing which is a potential hazard and public safety risk.

In closing, there are several issues with the Opera Bar that need to be addressed to ensure public safety and minimise the impacts on surrounding residents.

Yours sincerely,
