



NSW Government  
Department of Environment and Planning,  
22-23 Bridge Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

By email: [information@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:information@planning.nsw.gov.au)

**SSD 6471 SYDNEY MODERN ART GALLERY OF NSW, SYDNEY**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for, and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action. It has three branches in NSW and this submission is made on behalf of the Sydney and Northern NSW (i.e., the local) branch (the Branch).

The need for additional space for the beleaguered art gallery is not contested. However, it is not acceptable to insert buildings to the north of the Art Gallery, on what is a healing landscape: after the Domain and the RBG were originally one connected landscape until 'torn' apart by the wounding Cahill Expressway-Eastern distributor. The subsequently constructed land bridge provided a restorative green connection between the Royal Botanic Garden and the Domain that helped reconnect the broken landscape and re-establish the sense of the Art Gallery being a 'pavilion in a park'.

The AGNSW could get equal space by extending east (or east and south) from the back of the AGNSW's current footprint with far less negative visual impact – wrapping around one Moreton Bay fig near the gallery's rear, and relocating the Brett Whiteley sculpture 'Almost Once', with a net improvement of the landscape setting. Additionally this would serve the public interest by healing the landscape scar left when the other trench cut through the public land by another section of the Cahill Expressway/Eastern Distributor. This would leave the land bridge to the north open for views and quiet enjoyment and maintain the current 'pavilion in the park' concept where the Domain landscape is pre-eminent with occasional structures within it, while improving the setting at the rear of the Art Gallery that is presently a disgraceful jumble of disorder.

It is effrontery to claim that landscape to the north of the Art Gallery is 'under utilised' – the only part of the proposed building site that could be called 'under utilised' might be that over the oil bunkers. Our fragile cultural landscapes are often under valued or misunderstood and ever-vulnerable to land grabs. It seems the current government has a pattern of always claiming the choice public land - the easy option. The proposal is indicative of the lack of looking more broadly or to the landscape that might be genuinely improved by this change.

In conclusion, we recommend that the Department of Planning refuse this current proposal and preserve the significance of the open landscape and landscape context of this exceptional heritage item. We recommend that the architects be encouraged to use this opportunity to improve the context to the rear of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Yours faithfully,

  
Gina Plate 12 December 2017

Committee member, Sydney & Northern NSW Branch Australian Garden History Society