

18<sup>th</sup> December 2015

4 / 8 Hickson Road  
The Rocks, NSW 2000

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

Attn: Acting Director – Key Sites

Dear Madam,

**State Significant Development Application and Variation of the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Scheme for the “Remediation, Renewal and Adaptive Re-Use of Campbell's Stores”, The Rocks (SSD 7056)**

I object to the proposed development, particularly the appropriateness and design of a new four-storey glass box to the north of Campbell's Stores. This is an intrusive and ill-conceived structure that will have negative visual impact, diminish the heritage significance of Campbell's Stores and result in the loss of the opportunity for improved public access and landscaping to the foreshore of Campbell's Cove.

My objection is focused on the grounds of process and heritage:

- The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) should not have been able to provide landowner's consent to any State Significant Development once the Government had decided to transfer SHFA's powers to other entities.
- There should be no decisions made about development of Campbell's Cove until after Premier Baird's proposed review of control and ownership of government-owned lands around Sydney Harbour announced on 28 September 2015: 'the Government is currently examining the most appropriate land use planning, heritage, and management framework for The Rocks precinct in consultation with the Commonwealth Government'.
- I also understand that the new Greater Sydney Commission will have oversight of the entire harbour foreshore. Given both these developments, Tallawoladah's proposals are premature and should be incorporated into a holistic review process. This requested delay is particularly important given the heritage significance of the Campbell's Stores building itself.
- The one month exhibition time is inadequate for assessment of a **State Significant** Development for which there are about forty-five separate documents to read. It should be two months at least and preferably three. Members of the public, especially those who are working and/or who are not fully au fait with related documentation or legislation, just don't have the time otherwise and so are denied a proper voice in the process.
- The application appears to have been put together hastily/cynically and without adequate information in order to make the last possible exhibition period for 2015. It doesn't comply with the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) related to providing information on:
  - the cumulative impacts of noise,

- the specifics of proposed land uses and their locations within either Campbell's Stores or the proposed new glass box,
- the details of patron capacity and hours of operation related to specific uses,
- the proposed new building's compatibility (or otherwise) with adjoining buildings,
- a plan of the proposed divisions and usage of the strata lots proposed

These omissions make it impossible for the Department to assess the application properly.

Stakeholders, and the public at large, can only submit responses based on a partial knowledge of what's proposed. At the same time, these omissions seem to represent further evidence of the applicant's attempt to camouflage the real nature of its proposals.

- There are a considerable number of inconsistencies between recommendations/ requirements provided in Consultants' reports and the architects' design proposals. Equally, design proposals fail to resolve inconsistencies between Consultants' recommendations. For example:
  - designs fail to make allowance for the wind barriers needed to address noise level requirements in the proposed outdoor eating areas
  - the ventilation report recommends that windows on Hickson Rd need to be **open for most of the year** yet the noise assessment report fails to address the impact of this.

Again, this seems to point to the haste with which the applicant wanted the application to be put on exhibition.

- The title of the application – 'Remediation, Renewal and Adaptive Re-Use of Campbell's Stores' (SSD 7056) is misleading. It makes no mention of one of its most significant and highly controversial aspects – the applicant's desire to erect a four-storey high contemporary building (effectively a glass box) right next door to the very building whose heritage it's claiming to want to protect. There don't seem to be any remediation works proposed despite this being the first word of the project title.

This would appear to be another cynical attempt to have the application sneak under the public radar. Applications should only be allowed on exhibition if they have a title that reflects all of their key aspects.

- I don't believe there should be any building obscuring the northern side of Campbell's Stores. If there was to be one, its design should be decided by competition and the development of the site should be open to public tender.
- The Stakeholder consultation process was flawed. Information provided at the two Stakeholders' meetings that I attended was not true - i.e. it was a lie - and as such, a deliberate attempt to mislead Stakeholders. We were told that the intended use of the proposed new building was 'up market retail'. The application does not mention this as an intended use but instead talks (but fails to provide details) of the 'use of existing and proposed building and reconfigured outdoor dining area for restaurant, cafes and bars ...'. Stakeholders were told that there would be no trading beyond midnight but the applicant asks for trade to 2 am.
- The consultation process was selective with regard to the information it included in the EIS. The EIS ignores two issues raised in the Stakeholders' meeting I attended:
  - Ø The request that the application include photomontages showing views of the proposed new building from the east without the existing fig tree. While the fig tree is very attractive, its roots have already caused considerable damage to the Park Hyatt Hotel and for that reason alone, its long term existence is uncertain. The applicant implies that the fig tree softens the impact of the glass box. Decision makers should be shown pictures indicating the reality of the proposed new building – as the 'stand- alone' building it would be. If the applicant thinks it needs to be hidden, it shows that the building is clearly one at odds with its setting, as well as unattractive in itself.

- Ø The request for the specifics of building and development consents for the one-storey pavilion currently attached to Bay 11 of Campbell's Stores. The Campbell's Stores' Conservation Management Plan (CMP) describes this structure as 'intrusive' and states that it should be removed.

Stakeholders, including the Heritage Council, were told that the structure was erected prior to the current tenancy (i.e. that of Dockside Group, one of the applicants within the newly formed Tallawoladah Pty Ltd). This is not true. There has been significant reconstruction work done since 2002 to enclose what was a pergola and to raise its roof, yet the applicant cannot provide any approvals for this work. I trust the Department will investigate this further so as to prevent the applicant using this existing, and apparently unapproved, structure as justification for erecting a new and even less appropriate building in its place.

- In 2014 SHFA engaged Godden Mackay Logan to prepare the Campbell's Stores Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The Heritage Council of NSW subsequently endorsed this plan on 15 July 2014. It is currently the principal guiding document for Campbell's Stores' conservation and development. Despite this, the applicant seems to be relying on a document called Campbell's Stores Architectural and Public Domain Study (2012). This document has no statutory weight, has never been formally exhibited or adopted and so should not inform any planning for this State Significant site.
- For reasons of consistency, this application needs to be considered in conjunction with SHFA's separate SSD application (7246) for public domain and foreshore works and not in isolation from it.

## **1. The Campbell's Stores' building**

The project title is 'Remediation, Renewal and Adaptive Re-Use of Campbell's Stores'. The focus is 'adaptive re-use' of Campbell's Stores to create the spaces best-suited to the applicant's restaurant, café and bar related fit-outs - and presumably also strata sub-divisions. The 'renewal' seems to be a re-working of the building to accommodate more effective and/or appealing business enterprises; there seems to be more destruction of the existing fabric of the building than 'remediation'.

### **The heritage significance of the Campbell's Stores' building**

- Campbell's Stores is located within The Rocks' heritage precinct and is one of the most important of its remaining heritage buildings. It is a three level sandstone, brick and slate building of state heritage significance and the only surviving 19<sup>th</sup> century warehouse still in existence on the foreshores of Sydney Cove. Campbell's Stores is a superb example of buildings of this type and from this period and is all that survives of what was once an important wharf and store complex within Campbell's Cove.
- Campbell's Stores is local landmark, important for its location within the heritage streetscape of Hickson Road and for its visibility from the World Heritage Listed Opera House as well as a wide area of Sydney Harbour.
- The Stores are an important historical source of information on Sydney's early maritime activity especially in relation to the change over time related to its building design and layout, warehouse activities, maritime procedures and technology.

## Change and its implications

- Over a number of years, since 2002, tenants have totally reconstructed this pergola structure, with the inclusion a new and higher roof, the erection of decorative lattice screens, the installation of glass doors and walls behind the screens, and the internal lining of the roof and glass walls. The applicant has been unable to provide any approvals for these works, which now completely obscure the ground floor level of Campbell's Stores building at its northern end.
- While the project title gives the impression that the applicant proposes to bring about the 'Remediation, Renewal and Adaptive Re-Use of Campbell's Stores', a close reading of the documentation indicates that the focus is on 'adaptive re-use' and that the end result of that would be
  - further incursions into the fabric of the building to facilitate increasing its current 4 tenancies to 'approximately 13' and so further subdivision. This addresses the commercial goals of the applicant at the expense of conserving heritage elements of the building and/or restoring its warehouse configuration. The extent of these is hard to assess as the applicant hasn't provided a sub-division plan or details of the specific usage of the strata lots proposed (reason in itself for this application not to be approved). However, given that the Stores' internal spaces and original internal fabric are ranked as 'Exceptional', the new subdivision of the building will result in further destruction of its original features and materials, further limitation of people's ability to interpret its original warehouse uses and the introduction of materials and features which additionally undermine the Stores' heritage significance.
  - the creation of outdoor eating areas, with chairs, tables and umbrellas on Hickson Rd. While this is an appealing image, it would reduce visibility to this (western) side of the Stores and limit people's opportunity to appreciate the building's original form and function. This western elevation is the side that is most in keeping with the original form of Campbell's Stores and the one that most reveals the Stores' 19<sup>th</sup> century character. To maintain its heritage significance, this façade needs to be kept intact as much as possible.
  - the removal of the existing awnings and canopies adjoining the eastern elevation of the Stores. This is the elevation that faces the foreshore and the Opera House so removing these intrusive elements would reveal the building they currently hide. However, this improvement would be short-lived. The applicant wants to replace the old intrusive elements with new ones - stand-alone canopies that feature perforated precast concrete roofs. These are not transparent and so will prevent the public having clear views of the eastern (foreshore) side of Campbell's Stores.
  - the contravention of a large number of policies within the Campbell's Stores Conservation Management Plan (CMP), which SHFA commissioned and which the Heritage Council endorsed in July 2014, only 18 months ago. These include:

### Policy 1

The future use of Campbell's Stores should be consistent with its outstanding cultural significance, should not impact on significant fabric and spaces, and should provide for public access to the building.

### Policy 8

Significant fabric should be conserved using conservation processes appropriate to the assessed level of significance. Restoration and reconstruction should aim to recover or reveal significance.

### Policy 11

External alterations or additions should be discouraged; however, if required to meet approved interpretation, re-use or cultural tourism requirements, these should be of a minor nature, and subservient to the primary architectural features and composition of the existing structure. New works should not obscure significance.

### Policy 13

An appropriate physical and visual setting should be maintained for Campbell's Stores by allowing no development within the setting that would adversely impact on the place or on views to and from the place.

### Policy 18

Any new development must respect the cultural significance of the property and its setting and not destroy or obscure historical associations. The introduction of new fabric should be undertaken in such a manner that it does not result in a lessening of the cultural significance of the place. New work should be identifiable as such and should, wherever possible, be

## 2. The four-storey high glass building

The affront to heritage that the proposed glass building represents makes me wonder if it's just a ruse to distract attention from the weaknesses in the applicant's supposed heritage-related proposals for the 'Adaptive Re-Use of Campbell's Stores' (see above). However, it's there in the application so I'll state my strong objections to it on the following grounds:

- It is the worst of the applicant's proposals. It would intrude onto Campbell's Stores' heritage curtilage as designated in the Campbell's Stores Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and destroy any sense of the Stores' past nature and significance.
- The glass building would comprise three levels sitting on four columns. It would have the appearance of a tall and bulky glass box on stilts and would obscure all of the Stores' northern elevation. Its minimal 2.5 metre undercroft would be oppressive and tunnel-like and this, along with its intended use for outdoor eating, would serve as a barrier, limiting public access to the foreshore and severely constraining existing views to the Opera House from this location.
- The proposed glass box would be located next to Bay 11 on the northern elevation of Campbell's Stores. When measured from the proposed new ground level, it would be 13.3 metres high with the inclusion of its 1 metre high lift overrun. This exceeds the height restriction on the foreshore frontage by 14.5m, more than 250% and on the Hickson Road elevation by 10.5m, or 140%. **This would require a significant spot re-zoning under the Sydney Cove Re-Development Authority Scheme (SCRAS). One-off variations to this should not be permitted in advance of the Premier's holistic review of planning for the Sydney harbour foreshore.**
- Given this height and bulk, the proposed new four-storey glass box would dwarf the heritage-listed Stores, dominate the Campbell's Cove foreshore and be the tallest building on this section of the Hickson Rd streetscape.
- The proposed new ground level would be 1.94 metres higher than the existing one so as to accommodate a basement area. Contrary to claims that there would be a four metre setback between the two buildings, the basement level of the glass box would abut the Stores and effectively bury the ground floor of the Stores' 'Highly Significant' northern façade almost to the tops of its existing windows. This is shown very clearly in the following sections of JPW's Design Statement – the northern elevation profile (p.96,) the Concepts diagram (p.102) and the Bay 12 'artistic impression' (artistic

impression?) listed for the 4<sup>th</sup> of the series of 'Day 12' (Bay 12?) Images. (no page number given). The 5<sup>th</sup> 'Day 12' image on the following page omits showing the upper section of the windows. It therefore misleads the reader as to the significant extent to which the raised ground level 'buries' the northern elevation of Campbell's Stores.

- The deficiencies in the building's design for this site are evident in the Visual Impact Statement which states that 'The proposed new building at Bay 12 is primarily obscured from view by the adjacent Fig tree thus limiting its degree of intrusion to the character of this zone'. If the building needs to be hidden from view, it's clearly inappropriate in this location. As to the fig tree, what are its chances of survival? The arborist's report states that 4 metres of its canopy would need to be lopped off to enable construction of the new building. The Architectural Design Statement notes its already negative impact on the adjacent storm water outlet. (Architectural Design Statement, p.36).
- Construction of this building would be at odds with the guidelines for Policy 13 of the CMP: 'The need to retain a suitable setting for Campbell's Stores should be considered when assessing any proposal for new development or alterations within or around the site. No development that would detract from the maritime setting of the property or obscure key views to or from Campbell's Stores should be permitted.' (CMP, 2014, p.168)
- The application does not state an intended specific use for this building so one can only assume that it falls within the very general description of proposed usage as cafes, bars and restaurants. This fits with suggestions as early as May this year the applicant was canvassing 'expressions of interest' for 16 eating venues on the Campbell's Stores site (see Hospitality magazine, May 2015). However in consultation meetings in September, the applicant told stakeholders that the building's intended use was 'up market retailing'. No building should be approved without a clear indication of its specific use, and particularly not one with such negative impact.
- The building would be located within the buffer zone of the World Heritage Listed Sydney Opera House. Objectives for the zone expect '[recognition] that views and vistas between the Sydney Opera House and other public places within that zone contribute to its world heritage value.' (Cl. 53(2)(b), SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005). The glass box would disrupt the view of 19<sup>th</sup> century Sydney that visitors and locals can currently enjoy from the Opera House.
- The glass box would contravene the Opera House's 2005 Management Plan which requires any development within the buffer zone to maintain, protect and enhance views to The Opera House. The glass box would limit currently available public views of the Opera House from the space between Campbell's Stores and the Park Hyatt Hotel As someone said recently, 'it would be like viewing the Opera House through a slit in a letter box'. The application does not include any analysis of this impact, although it should have done so.
- The glass box would destroy the opportunity for people to appreciate Campbell's Stores' significance as a stand-alone industrial building within its maritime setting. It would obscure views of the northern elevation of Bay 11. This would be particularly the case for people trying to view the Stores from the northern end of Hickson Road, from the pedestrian pathway on the eastern side of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and from Dawes Point Park. (see Appendix C2 Photomontages 6a and 7a). Its raised ground level would 'bury' most of the ground floor of the Campbell's Stores northern elevation.
- Campbell's Stores has been a stand-alone building for most of its life and certainly since about 1902. Prior to that only minor structures and a single storey cottage were within the area to the north of Bay 11. The Stores have never been seen as part of a continuous street façade of mixed architectural styles (as the applicant has recently claimed). Rather, the Stores were for most of their existence 19<sup>th</sup> century waterfront warehouse buildings, of simple utilitarian design, viewed in the whole. To 'fill the gap' between the Stores and the Park Hyatt and treat this part of the site as an 'infill site' as the

architects have recently described it, is to irrevocably and detrimentally alter the heritage setting of the Stores and the historical context within which it will be appreciated.

- Retaining Campbell's Stores' historic physical and visual connection to the waterfront is essential. No development should be carried out which has any possibility of compromising this connection. A new public space would provide the opportunity for the thousands of people who visit the Rocks to actually see the Campbell's Stores northern elevation. Importantly, it would deliver the Stores' full heritage curtilage.
- This is a major proposal virtually hidden within a State Significant Development application misleadingly entitled 'Remediation, Renewal and Adaptive Re-Use of Campbell's Stores'. It would be wrong to inflict this glass box on the public, when the project title had not even alerted people to what was proposed.

## Conclusion

The Rocks is the only area of Sydney with a strong association with the early history of European settlement. That heritage is the precinct's main attraction and it should be enhanced not undermined by intrusive and competing elements that would devalue this significance. The glass box would completely dominate the simple 19th century architecture of Campbell's Stores, its foreshore and its streetscape. It would contribute nothing to its functionality. Any notion that it represents 'urban renewal' in this context is an absolute joke.

The proposed development fails to deliver an appropriate and considered response to this historic site on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour and within the buffer zone of the Sydney Opera House. The proposal in its current form should be refused and there should be no development to the north of the Campbell's Stores.

The land proposed for the new building is in public ownership and it should be utilised in its entirety for public access and open space to provide a low key recreation area where people can sit, view, reflect on and enjoy Campbell's Stores, the Opera House and Sydney's Harbour. This would facilitate Campbell's Stores being visible on all four sides as it has been for most of its existence. It would allow the thousands of people who visit the Rocks to actually see the Campbell's Stores northern elevation and it would deliver the full heritage curtilage as described in the CMP. It would increase space for public access to and from the foreshore, especially at celebrations like New Year and Vivid. It would relieve what can be a bottleneck at this very popular entry point to the foreshore.

Another typical example of the apparent deception is the diagram on page 96 of the Design Statement shows that the glass box would be one full storey higher than the gutter level of Campbell's Stores and then there'd be the lift overrun on top of that! There's a lot of detail and information conveniently included in those diagrams that is not evident elsewhere.

As I've already indicated above, the applicant has either not provided the necessary documentation to support SSD 7056 or has provided information that is inaccurate or misleading. For that reason alone, the application should not be approved.

Given the Premier's recent announcements regarding a review of government-owned lands around Sydney Harbour and the revitalisation of the entire Sydney Cove foreshore, approving a new four-storey building in Campbell's Cove, outside that process, would be inappropriate and certainly premature. Government-owned lands, especially along the Sydney Cove foreshore, should be considered as a whole, not bit by bit.