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SOLUTIONS
452-77006

R&S Roderick Storie
SOLUTIONS

SIMPLEY CRITCHER
ACCOUNTANTS

Bakery Dishes
Cakes & Pastries
Coffee Ice Creams

Submission in Response to the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project EIS

January 2013

Proponent: Mr Andrew Beattie, NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure

Respondents: Megan Wood and Roderick Storie
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Affected Properties: 62- 68 George Street, Thompson Square Windsor (Cnr. Bridge St)
66- 68 George Street, Thompson Square Windsor.
17 Bridge Street, Thompson Square Windsor.

INTRODUCTION

We strongly object to the Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) proposed Windsor Bridge Replacement Project commonly known as Option 1. We are adjoining and affected landowners. We own three buildings directly affected by the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project (WBRP).

- 62-64 George Street, Thompson Square owned jointly.
- 66-68 George Street, Thompson Square and 17 Bridge Street held in a company Aymage Pty Ltd

Each of these buildings is part of the Thompson Square Conservation Precinct and is listed on the State Heritage Register and on the Register of The National Trust.

We have conducted a legal practice and other business from one or other of those addresses since 1994 and have continuously leased them as a mix of commercial and residential tenancies.

CONSULTATION:

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION:

We were never personally consulted any stage of the project. We were not identified ,at any stage of the project, as a "key stakeholders" despite the fact that Option 1 will have an irrevocable and detrimental effect on the fabric and curtilage of our buildings (EIS Vol 2 pages 106-111), the state significant heritage value (EIS Vol2, page 112-113) of our buildings and the economic value of our buildings (EIS Vol 4 page 49- 51).

We were not consulted prior to the design of the 10 options in 2008/9. We were not consulted when Option 1 was declared the favoured option. We were not informed about the Design and Heritage Community Focus Group meetings and only found out about them by chance. Any information received from the RMS has been at our own instigation. Efforts by us to voice our concerns with the Minister and the Premier regarding this project have been met with form letters containing identically drafted wording and misinformed content. (See *attachment 1.*)

This has also been the experience of all our fellow Thompson Square owners who, other than the Reynolds (no 10 Bridge Street), Mrs Weller (no 6 Bridge Street) and Mr Armstrong (at no 4 Bridge St), had no direct contact with anyone from the RMS or the Hawkesbury City Council prior to the decision being made to proceed with Option 1 in November 2011. There appears to have been a concerted effort by the RMS to avoid any contact or dissemination of information to the Thompson Square owners.

From the start in, early 2009, only those three owners were informed about the Option 1 plans on a "need to know basis". The reason that the RMS was forced to consult with them was that the original Option 1 design severely restricted their access by delivering a roadway

half-way up their front doorways. Also, far from being consulted, these owners were told that Option 1 was the preferred option, that other options would be offered but they were "just a part of the process" and that there were only funds for Option 1. This all took place well before July/August 2009 when the Options brochure was produced.

The whole "Consultation " preparation for the EIS does not comply with the Director General's requirements because all the Thompson Square property owners were not identified at the inception of the bridge replacement project as a key "Individual Stakeholders" .

The Director General's Requirements specifically state ***"During the preparation of the EIS, you should undertake an appropriate and justified level of consultation with relevant parties, including and not limited to..... adjoining and affected landowners"*** (EIS Vol 1 page 125).

This has not been done..

ADJOINING AND AFFECTED LANDOWNERS – WHO THEY ARE

The RMS has, from the beginning of the project, endeavoured to argue that Thompson Square is a portion of land comprising a park which has been intersected by a road to the bridge. It has promulgated this uninformed and misguided argument which has been parroted and by state and local politicians and local councillors, who argue that it will reinstate a square, effectively a rectangular shaped steeply sloping a park.

Thompson Square is not a park. It is a civic space defined by buildings on three sides and the natural boundary of the river bank. The boundaries of Thompson Square are inclusive of the buildings that surround it, all the way to their rear boundaries.

In the case of Thompson Square it can be said that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts as was recognised by the Heritage Council of NSW when it declared Thompson Square a Conservation Precinct under a permanent conservation order in July 1982. Alterations to any part of the precinct directly affect all the other elements in the precinct.

Because they all form Thompson Square, the buildings in Thompson Square are all directly affected by The Windsor Bridge Replacement Project. Each property and hence each owner is affected to a greater or lesser extent.

THIS IS THE PLAN REFERRED TO IN INTERIM/PERMANENT CONSERVATION ORDERS No 126
N.S.W. GOVERNMENT GAZETTE No. 22 OF 2-7-82
SUBJECT LAND SHOWN THUS

Heritage Council of New South Wales

PLAN

Under the Heritage Act, 1977

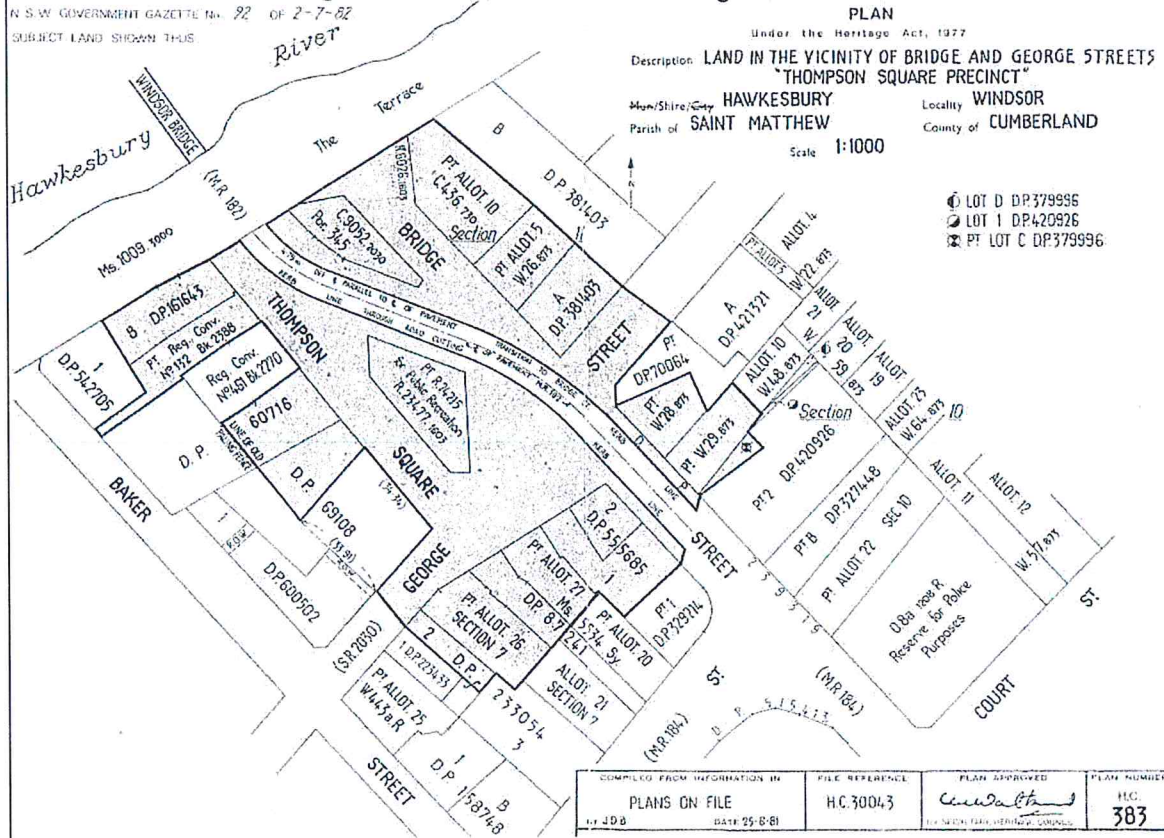
Description: LAND IN THE VICINITY OF BRIDGE AND GEORGE STREETS
"THOMPSON SQUARE PRECINCT"

Man/Shire/City: HAWKESBURY
Parish of: SAINT MATTHEW

Locality: WINDSOR
County of: CUMBERLAND

Scale: 1:1000

- LOT D DP379996
- LOT 1 DP420826
- PT LOT C DP379996



(Please note that the "Macquarie Arms Hotel" cnr. Thompson Square Rd and George St appears to be excluded but has an individual listing as well as being a part of the precinct)

Volume 2 of the EIS is entirely devoted to the Historical Heritage Assessment of Thompson Square. Each of the Properties in the Square, EIS reference Sites numbered 1 to 16, is forecast to suffer negative impacts as a result of the project. These impacts include major negative visual impacts for all properties, the threat of physical impacts from vibration and noise during and after construction and loss of heritage value and loss of amenity from traffic noise which may likely cause a resultant drop in property values .

The EIS forecasts these impacts. It follows that all the Thompson Square property owners being "adjoining and affected property owners", as described by the Director General, will be detrimentally affected. Despite this, they were not identified as individual stakeholders or as a stakeholder group. They were not consulted by the RMS, particularly during the crucial time between 2008 to 2011 when option 1 was singled out as the preferred option.

The EIS (Vol 1 Table 6-1) See below:

Lists the Individual Stakeholders as identified by the RMS prior to the EIS preparation and during that time when the 10 Options were chosen and the preferred option decided.

The Thompson Square property owners were not cited as “adjoining and affected landholders” section. “Residents”, “Business Owners” and a group called “Windsor Residents First Group” all are listed as having consultation activities directed to them however the Thompson Square property owners were excluded.

Table 6-1 Consultation undertaken before EIS preparation (July 2009 - November 2011)

Community/ stakeholder group	Individual stakeholders	Consultation activities
Councils and government agencies	Department of Planning and Infrastructure Heritage Branch and Heritage Council Office of Environment and Heritage Hawkesbury City Council Maritime Services Division of RMS	Letters Telephone calls Meetings and briefings Stakeholder workshop
Specialist interest groups, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Aboriginal stakeholders	Hawkesbury Nepean User Group Windsor Business Group Royal Australian Historical Society National Trust of Australia Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council Darag Tribal Aboriginal Corporation	Letters Telephone calls Meetings and briefings Stakeholder workshop
The public, including community groups and adjoining and affected landowners ¹	Residents Business owners Windsor Residents First Group	Community update newsletter Public displays Project website Shopping centre display Community workshop Meetings and briefings

1. Further details of activities provided in Table 6-2.

Also the property owners in Thompson Square who were not residential owner occupiers, apart from not being personally consulted, did not receive the initial “Community Update Newsletter” outlining the 9 options in August 2009 and inviting community opinion and comment.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

The Community Update Newsletter was sent to residents in the following areas: Windsor Downs, South Windsor, McGraths Hill, Pitt Town, residents who would rarely cross Windsor Bridge, and inexplicably, Berkshire Park residents who are not in the Hawkesbury LGA . Some parts of Wilberforce and Freemans Reach and Windsor were included in the mailout however areas whose residents use Windsor Bridge on a daily basis received no information. These areas include Glossodia, Kurrajong, East Kurrajong, Blaxland's Ridge,

Kurmond, North Richmond, Lower Portland, Wisemans Ferry, Ebenezer. The selection of areas for the newsletter distribution appears to be chosen on the basis of residents who would be least affected by the proposed option. If a resident was not from one of the selected areas and did not read the local newspaper then they would have no awareness of the project at all.

BUSINESS CONSULTATION :

The Socio-economic study completed as part of this project is deficient and neglectful in the extreme and has taken no real account of the opinions and plans of businesses in Windsor. No data was gathered from businesses within Thompson Square – the area which will be primarily affected by Option 1. No employee or consultant from Skyhigh Data Australia Pty Ltd, (*References - SGC Economics and Planning Windsor Bridge Over the Hawkesbury River – Socio-economic investigations Aug 2011*), interviewed us as property owners or business owners in regard to the socio-economic survey nor any of our tenants . No neighbouring business owner in Thompson Square was surveyed and no patrons surveyed on a Sunday which is prime trading day for this precinct.

This study, which forms the basis for the Socio-economic evaluation in the EIS, failed to take into account the unique and specialised tourist and hospitality nature of the businesses in Thompson Square compared to the lower town centre. Objections from business owners within Thompson Square, proffered after the decision on Option 1 was announced, have been dismissed as the work of a “few people with vested commercial interests.” Commercial interests are what make the Windsor economy work, particularly with regard to its heritage tourism sector. We and the other business owners in Thompson Square understand the importance of its unique heritage character and historic vista and have seen this increasingly diminish with the ever growing traffic and increased heavy vehicle usage destroying the Square’s attraction and amenity as a tourist and recreational destination which has a flow on effect to the rest of the Windsor township.

The SGS study failed to recognize that there were and are businesses operating on the Eastern side of Bridge Street in Thompson Square. It also misidentified the nature of the businesses in the Square. There was only 1 business in the “Cafe/restaurant category “for the whole of the Windsor survey area and no business from the “Take-away retail” category surveyed (Attachment C, Windsor Bridge Over the Hawkesbury- Socio-economic investigations Aug 2011). In short the socio-economic evaluations included in The EIS are deceptive and misleading at best and designed to promote the endorsement of Option 1.

The Study did recognise however that a bypass option (Option 6) ***“would reduce vehicle traffic passing Thompson Square by around 1,200 vehicles(traffic model estimate) each morning and again in evening. The reduction in passing traffic could support an increase in turnover for businesses around the square” and “Option 1 is likely to adversely impact on the character of the centre as the new bridge approach in option 1 would cut through part of Thompson Square. Where the current road descends in to the cutting as it passes through the square, the new approach would be visible from the reserve and more relevantly in the current context, the businesses providing***

outdoor dining facilities overlooking Thompson Square and down the river.” (page 27, Windsor Bridge Replacement/Socio-economic Investigation)

Our tenants and the other tourism and hospitality businesses in the Square are already reporting a marked decrease in business over the last 5 years due to the increases in traffic through the square. The future ahead looks bleak with the prospect of Option 1 construction phase i.e. 20 months of pile driving noise, dust, traffic disruption and an ugly fenced off Thompson Square construction site. Then the aftermath, an unusable and steep public space with heritage vistas irrevocably changed, being overshadowed by a noisy, modern concrete major roadway. We will be all lucky if business even survives the next two years if Option 1 is approved.

Tourism is a key industry for the region, building on the area’s historic and Aboriginal heritage and natural values. The area around the project includes a number of tourist uses and attractions, such as the Hawkesbury Paddle Wheeler and the Hawkesbury Regional Gallery. (Windsor Bridge Replacement/Socio-economic Investigation)

Despite mentioning tourism in a number of points within the EIS, the existing tourism industry in Thompson Square has been ignored. However one business, the Hawkesbury Paddlewheeler, is singled out for special attention. This business is mentioned numerous times in the EIS despite being privately owned and operated and whose patrons generally arrive at Windsor Wharf and depart from there without having visited the town.

The RMS and HCC both appear very concerned about accommodating and enhancing the services of The Hawkesbury Paddlewheeler to the detriment of all the other businesses in Thompson Square. There are references to this business with regard to the heightening of the road at the Terrace so that coaches may drop off and pick up Paddlewheeler passengers right at the wharf. There are references to the Paddlewheeler extending its services by being able to traverse the other side of the river in the event of the demolition of the historic bridge(Windsor Bridge Over The Hawkesbury, Socio-economic Investigations August 2011 p. 29) .

The Hawkesbury Paddlewheeler was bought to Windsor by the late James Kelly from the Lane Cove River Park operator in about 2000. The business is for sale and the boat could conceivably at some point be relocated to another waterway. No other private business in the Thompson Square Precinct is treated with the same deference as the Hawkesbury Paddlewheeler or even acknowledged by the RMS.

Hawkesbury Regional Gallery is located within Roam Area 3, at the other end of Windsor in a location which is unlikely to contribute to tourism within the project area, or be affected by the desecration of the historic precinct.

TRAFFIC

A HISTORIC ROUTE ?

Thompson Square was proclaimed over 200 years ago and a long time before the bridge was built. Cars obviously did not exist at that time and had they, the bridge would most likely have been located in a much more suitable place. The topography of the embankment was so steep that when horses and carts crossed the new bridge they were required to negotiate, Punt Hill Road, a zigzagging track winding through the Square. However most people of the day would use the Terrace and Kable or Baker Streets as it was much safer and less steep.

The claim that Old Bridge Street is the historic route to the river and the "justification" for the Option 1 roadway being some sort of heritage reinstatement shows an extraordinary ignorance that has been continually repeated including in Parliament House, See attachment 1. Letter from John Ajaka on behalf of the Premier.

"Bridge Street" was named after the Bridge across South Creek. No-one ever used the road known as "Old Bridge Street" to access the river. It was far too steep an incline for any animal or machine of the time. "Old Bridge Street" was a dirt extension of Bridge Street used to access the houses numbered 6 and 10. Everybody used the Terrace and Kable Street or sometimes Punt Hill Road to get to the river. Refer to CAWB, EIS Submission Report, "The Precedent Argument".

CONGESTION:

Congestion is currently caused by insufficient capacity at the Bridge Street/George Street roundabout and the configuration between this intersection and the Macquarie Street intersection. The traffic data shows that 70 per cent of vehicles using the Windsor Bridge crossing are considered to be through traffic. Vehicles are using this crossing as a "through route", to get to a destination other than the Windsor township. Much of this traffic is likely to be freight transport or people travelling to work in other areas of Sydney, and then returning home. (Options Report 3.9.4 Summary of traffic findings).

Option 1 will not address the current traffic congestion. This has been stated by RMS employees on a number of occasions. The traffic models of Option 1 shows that by 2026 travel demand would reach total capacity.

We have been continually told it is "a like for like" project and any improvements to traffic are more to do with the modification of the intersections rather than the bridge itself. If that is the case, how will it possibly cope with additional traffic.

POPULATION PRESSURES:

There is currently a planning proposal called 'Jacaranda Ponds' which has gateway approval for re-zoning. The development is located at Spinks Road, Glossodia, approximately 8 minutes drive from Windsor Bridge and the current proposal is for 580 half and quarter acre lots. Hawkesbury City Council has declared that the development will not be approved without significant progress in the building of the new bridge. There is a second development at Grose Vale Road, North Richmond, which will add further traffic stresses to

the North Richmond Bridge causing many vehicles to use Windsor Bridge as an alternative route and contributing further to the already unacceptable traffic congestion.

This inevitable increase of residential and industrial development west of the river will, over the years, will see an exponential increase in the volume and size of vehicles crossing through Thompson Square. Option 1 cements a major arterial road right through the heart of heritage in Windsor now and into the future.

HERITAGE EFFECTS

As described above, the Thompson Square Conservation Precinct is made up all the buildings that face the reserve and includes the reserve. The boundaries of the precinct extend to the back boundaries of the buildings.

As mentioned previously, each element of the Precinct relates directly to each other element, the buildings individually, their heritage cartilage, the reserve and the setting creating the unique heritage asset, vistas and landscape that is Thompson Square. No part of the Square can be substantially altered without diminishing the heritage asset and also affecting each the value of each element.

The Biosis specialist heritage report in the EIS finds the following:

- ³⁵₁₇ The impact of the demolition of Windsor Bridge would be high.
- ³⁵₁₇ The impact of the replacement bridge to the existing significant cultural landscape is anticipated to be high.
- ³⁵₁₇ Physical impacts associated with the construction of the replacement bridge are anticipated to be very high.
- ³⁵₁₇ The visual impact of the project on Thompson Square is anticipated to be very high.
- ³⁵₁₇ The physical impact on relics within Thompson Square is anticipated to be very high.
- ³⁵₁₇ Physical impacts of the modification to The Terrace are anticipated to be high with respect to archaeological resources.
- ³⁵₁₇ The visual impact of the roundabout on the northern bank is anticipated to be high with respect to the existing cultural landscape.

The Biosis specialist heritage report (p. 347) also recommends that the preferred action is to preserve Thompson Square and Windsor Bridge. It states that “...***the most appropriate treatment of Thompson Square and Windsor Bridge is to avoid any further negative impact and to take the opportunity identified by the Heritage Council to remove through traffic...preservation is the primary recommendation to retain significance. The project will impact on the State significance heritage values of Thompson Square and the most appropriate management measure for a significant cultural landscape such as this is to avoid the impacts proposed by the project. 2. The Windsor Bridge is***

also of State significance and retention and stabilisation of the bridge is the preferred action to ensure that its significance is retained. “ The current project will have a negative impact on the heritage assets in Thompson Square and Windsor Bridge. Further, the current project fails to meet one of the project objectives, namely: ***'To minimise the impact on heritage and the character of the local area '***.

POLLUTION AND NOISE - AMMENITY

COMMERCIAL PREMISES AND BUSINESSES GENERAL:

We have owned our buildings in Thompson Square for almost 20 years. In that time , particularly in the last 10 years, the amenity of the square has diminished exponentially. The existing pollution and noise has reached almost intolerable levels.

Thompson Square apart from being a residential and commercial precinct, is a much used recreational and tourist precinct. Hawkesbury City Council recognised this in about 1997 when they constructed the timber “Alfresco Decking “ in front of 66-84 George Street in response to the unregulated placement of tables and chairs on the footpath. HCC leases to our tenant at 68 George Street the area adjacent to his pizza shop for the purpose of outdoor dining. Similarly each of the businesses leases the area of decking in front of their cafe or restaurant.

The area in front of number 62-64 which is comprised of a partly paved area and flag pole is also classified by HCC as an alfresco dining area and we lease this area and maintain it. This area is directly adjacent to the George Street roundabout with high exposure to the traffic. It has steadily become less attractive to restaurant patrons over the years due to intolerable levels of exposure to noise and pollution. Very few people choose to sit there and only if all other available seating is taken. This area serves as direct comparison to the experience that a person in the Thompson Square reserve, or “parkland” , will experience under Option 1. With the roadway at the same level to the reserve the noise and pollution exposure will be intolerable as will the impact of this noise on the businesses that operate alfresco dining on the timber decking. These areas should be regarded as “Open Space” and the according to NSW Government Road Noise Policy (RNP) noise should be limits applied.

The Noise and Vibration report in the EIS is inadequate. It provides for only token treatment for a minority of the affected premises, and ignores the existing situation where noise levels in Thompson Square are already too high.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE EFFECTS ON 62 – 64 GEORGE STREET, 66-68 GEORGE STREET AND 17 BRIDGE STREET

Our buildings are described in the EIS Biosis report as Items 13, 17 Bridge Street and Item 14, 62 – 68 George Street (pages 100 – 104)

HERITAGE EFFECTS:

17 Bridge Street:

This late Georgian cottage which, although being commercially leased, has been a residential building up until 1990.

The Biosis report identifies impacts due to vibration. The RMS has done no noise or vibration testing to our knowledge.

The Visual Impacts are described as “none”. This is completely wrong as the cottage has clear sight of the roundabout and parts of the square where the road and traffic lights are to be installed.

In addition to the above it is noted that the car park to 17 Bridge Street and 62 – 68 George Street is accessed via a driveway between the buildings on Bridge Street. A pedestrian strip will be removed to make way for the Option 1 left hand turn into George Street. This will mean that fast moving traffic in this lane will make it impossible to turn into and out of the car park in peak periods.

62-64 George Street:

This building which shares a common wall with 66-68 George Street is comprised of a single storey Georgian section and a two storey section with balcony. It has a residential tenant in the upstairs unit and a commercial tenant at ground level.

The Biosis report recognizes that the building is of “Exceptional” heritage significance and that it could be subject to physical impacts from the project and recommends that a dilapidation report be completed prior to commencement of works. The RMS has not prepared a dilapidation report to date.

The report also finds that the Visual impact will be of a “Moderate Negative” degree. We say this should be recorded as a “High Negative” degree as the building looks directly onto Thompson Square, the proposed Option 1 traffic lights and bridge and road approaches. The whole heritage vista this building commands and the context of its cultural landscape will be permanently changed.

66-68 George Street:

This building shares a common wall with 62-64 George Street and is comprised of a two storey building containing two retail shops at ground level and two residential units on the upper level.

The Biosis report recognizes that the building is of "High" heritage significance and that it could be subject to physical impacts from the project and recommends that a dilapidation report be completed prior to commencement of works. The RMS has not prepared a dilapidation report to date.

The report also finds that the Visual impact will be of a "Moderate Negative" degree. We say this should be recorded as a "High Negative" degree as the building looks directly onto Thompson Square, the proposed Option 1 traffic lights and bridge and road approaches. The whole heritage vista this building commands and its context of its cultural landscape will be permanently changed.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

17 Bridge Street :

This building, although presently commercially leased, was used as a residential building prior to 1990. The RMS in the EIS has adopted a completely cavalier attitude towards buildings they deem to be "commercial" and have completely ignored the need for noise and vibration monitoring. Noise levels in and around this building are already at intolerable and unsafe levels.

Noise levels after construction will be much greater as part of the footpath in front of the cottage is taken by the left hand turning lane directing fast flowing traffic in front of this building. Truck braking and gears changes will increase due to heavy vehicles stopping and starting at the traffic lights in front of this building.

Having been constructed well before traffic noise intrusion was a consideration, most of glass in this building is the original glass, which is much thinner than the modern material. This further contributes to the structure's' vulnerability to external noise

62-68 George Street:

There are 3 residences in this building. Their shared balcony faces Thompson Square. The EIS fails to identify these three residences and address potential the impacts upon them by declining to monitor noise and vibration impacts.

Similarly the retail premises at ground level were ignored by the RMS with regard to any noise and vibration monitoring. Noise levels in and around this building are already at intolerable and unsafe levels.

Please refer to CAWB EIS Submission, Noise and Vibration discussion Paper

CONCLUSION

The only solution for the treatment of the unique national heritage asset Thompson Square and that will guarantee the commercial and tourism viability of Windsor is to:

³⁵₁₇ Repair the historic bridge

³⁵₁₇ Go back to the drawing board and look at superior alternative options such as the Rickabys Bypass route that will deliver many more benefits to the community and preserve the unique heritage of Thompson Square.

RMS please take note of your own EIS and web site information

Windsor Bridge Replacement Project, Historic Heritage Assessment & Statement of Heritage Impact, Report for Roads and Maritime Services NSW, November 2012

RECOMMENDATIONS

11.7.2 Conservation

Thompson Square is significant to at least a State level for its historical, associative, research and social values. It has an exceptional level of rarity. Some of the archaeological resource within Thompson Square and extending further south and north is also likely to be of at least State heritage significance, as are archaeological remains of the wharves within the body of the river. Windsor Bridge is a State significant structure that is rare and has historical and technical significance. Each item has, through the historical association with the other, become part of the same landscape. Both the square and bridge contribute to State significant views of Windsor as a historic township.

From a heritage conservation perspective the most appropriate treatment of Thompson Square and Windsor Bridge is to avoid any further negative impact and to take the opportunity identified by the Heritage Council to remove through traffic. The recommendations below have been made in response to the cultural significance of the project area.

As the significance of the archaeological resource within the project area, and in particular within Thompson Square and down to the river would be diminished by the project, the Preferred outcome is that this resource remains intact.

The Answer: A BYPASS,

A bypass is a road or highway that bypasses a town.

A bypass will divert the flow of 'through' traffic away from the town.

The benefits can be removing some traffic congestion in the town, reducing noise and vibration and improving road safety. An improved town amenity can, combined with other initiatives, make a town centre more attractive to visitors. (RMS Website-Town Bypasses)



The Hon. John Ajaka MLC
Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads
Member of the Legislative Council

ML 12/07202

Ms Megan Wood
290 Windsor Street
RICHMOND NSW 2753

Dear Ms Wood

Thank you for your letter to the Premier about the preferred option for the replacement Windsor Bridge. The Premier has asked me to respond on his behalf.

On 1 November 2011 a new organisation called Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) replaced the Roads and Traffic Authority and NSW Maritime. RMS will focus on service delivery, concentrating on the key tasks of building and maintaining road infrastructure and the day-to-day compliance and safety for roads and waterways.

RMS considered nine options for the bridge and approaches and selected the one that offers the most value for money while best meeting the requirements. The design will offer motorists a modern, higher level bridge with upgraded approaches providing smooth, improved road conditions for all vehicle types through the northern side of Thompson Square and across the river to Wilberforce Road.

RMS advises that the new bridge will be designed to meet current load standards for heavy vehicles, and it will be wide enough to enable them to pass without waiting. The 15.5 metre wide bridge will be linemarked for one lane in each direction and include road shoulders and a shared path for added vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist safety. It has been designed to maintain access during a 'once in five year' flood.

I acknowledge your concern and others in the community about a major road being built through the early 19th century Thompson Square. In order to alleviate this concern RMS will lower the level of the new approach road to reduce its visual obtrusiveness within the historic precinct. This has been made possible by lowering the planned speed limit on the approach road through the square from 60 km/h to 50 km/h.

Significantly, the upgraded approach road will be built over the original early 19th century bridge approaches (Old Bridge Street).

Level 35, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (61 2) 9228 5271 Fax: (61 2) 9228 5499 Email: office@ggay.minister.nsw.gov.au

This will reunify the open space, restore the original shape of the Thompson Square reserve and once again allow a view of this very significant heritage asset as it originally was. In addition, the realignment will allow unimpeded access to the river for the tourists and local residents in the park.

RMS is working with the Heritage Council of NSW and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage to develop a concept design and environmental impact statement for the proposed bridge and the approaches through Thompson Square. The environmental impact statement will be submitted to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and placed on public display in late 2012.

The environmental impact statement will provide a record of the existing heritage, traffic, noise and other environmental conditions. The statement will outline the anticipated effects of the construction of the new bridge and approaches on Thompson Square and the ongoing impact when the bridge is opened for traffic. The environmental impact statement will also list recommended management and/or mitigation measures for those effects and provide the justification for the chosen option against cost, social and environmental criteria. The public will be invited to make submissions on the environmental impact statement. RMS will present a submissions report to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure for his consideration and final determination.

Residents are invited to attend an upcoming meeting where RMS's project team will answer any questions, outlining plans for the site and show an interactive guided tour of the new bridge.

This meeting will be held at:

- Windsor Marketplace
Saturday 8 September 2012, 10am to 2pm

I hope this has been of assistance. For more information please contact Mr Peter Letts, General Manager Project Management, at RMS on (02) 8849 2069 or visit the Windsor Bridge project page on the RMS website (www.rms.nsw.gov.au/windsorbridge).

Yours faithfully



4 - SEP 2012

John Ajaka MLC
Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads