

22 June 2018

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Ms Carolyn McNally
Secretary
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39,
Sydney NSW 2001

Attn: Russle Hand

Dear Mr Hand

RE: Submission to Sydney Metro Victoria Cross Over Station Development

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Concept State Significant Development Application (SSD 8874) for the Sydney Metro Victoria Cross Over Station Development (OSD). This submission has been prepared by Ethos Urban on behalf of LIF Pty Ltd as Trustee for the Local Government Property Fund, who own a nearby property at 76 Berry Street, North Sydney (refer to **Figure 1**).

LIF Pty Ltd support the proposal as it contributes to the growth of the North Sydney Centre as a primary commercial office market and optimises the use of land around Victoria Cross Metro Station. This submission also raises the following matters for consideration in relation to the proposal:

- The outcome-based approach to solar access and public amenity of the proposal is encouraged to allow for new and innovative ways of delivering public amenity while not unreasonably affecting the overarching strategic objectives of the precinct and Sydney Metro.
- The proposal provides opportunities to deliver new underground pedestrian links, particularly under Berry Street to the proposed North of Centre Square.
- Activation of the Berry Street frontage should be further considered given its interface with the future Ward Street precinct and its role as a primary east-west connection.
- The location and significance of the proposal to the area warrants the acceleration of the draft Revised Ward Street Masterplan.

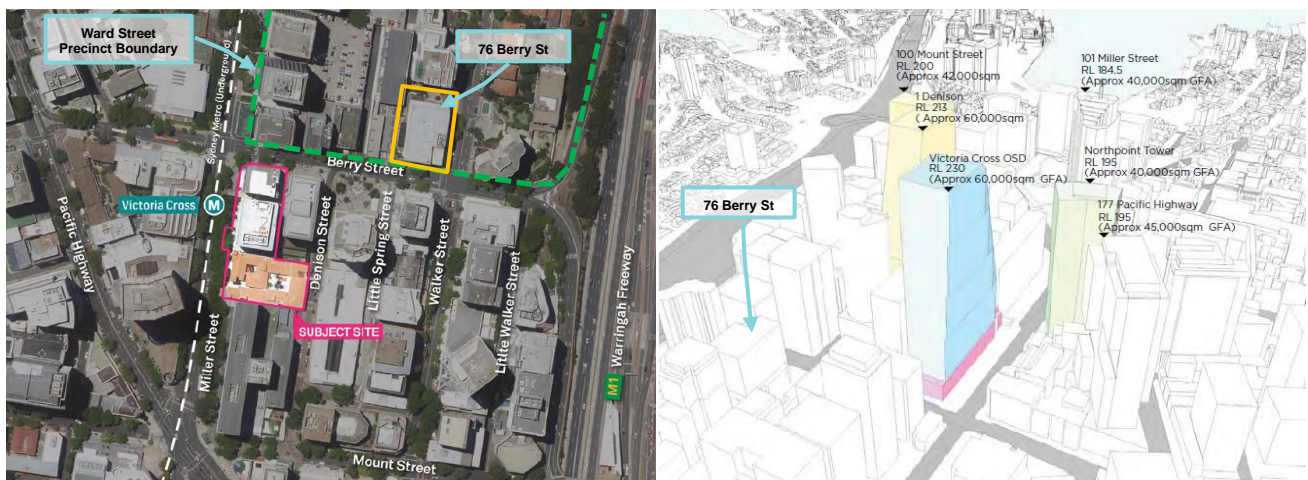


Figure 1 Site identification

Source: Transport for NSW

Support for the Concept Plan

The SSD application seeks concept plan approval for a new OSD comprising a 42 storey commercial tower at the Victoria Cross Metro Station site located at the corner of Miller Street and Berry Street, North Sydney. The application sets out the planning framework, including the establishment of a building envelope and design excellence strategy, to inform a future detailed development application for the OSD.

The OSD concept plan forms part of an integrated development with the Victoria Cross Metro Station (approved as part of the Sydney Metro City – Chatswood to Sydenham under SSI 7400) that will provide a new underground station at the heart of the North Sydney CBD and create a second gateway to support the continued commercial growth of the centre.

LIF Pty Ltd supports the concept proposal as it seeks to optimise the use of land in proximity to the Victoria Cross Metro Station and will help support the continued growth of the North Sydney CBD as an employment centre. The northern end of the CBD is currently undergoing generational transformation as the significant investment in public transport infrastructure, central to the next decade's growth, is constructed. The building is of a scale and design commensurate with its prominent location and catalytic role in facilitating this change and delivering on the employment goals of the North District Plan.

The following matters are raised for your consideration in relation to the proposal.

Solar Access

The proposed approach of the concept plan to the retention of solar access to surrounding areas of public open space is supported as it seeks to balance Council's desired urban design and amenity outcomes for the centre with the broader objectives of delivering State planning goals, including the delivery of jobs close to public transport.

The crucial role that the public domain plays in providing amenity for residents and workers, and creating a liveable CBD is recognised. However, the relevance and weight given to the existing Special Area solar access provisions of the North Sydney LEP 2012 in delivering public amenity needs to be weighed against the overarching strategic planning objectives of the area. In this regard, the goal of achieving increased commercial development around the new metro station should not be unduly constrained by rigid solar access requirements.

A pragmatic approach has recently been demonstrated by Council in their evaluation of the North Sydney Special Areas which included an analysis of the amenity offered by each of the listed CBD Special Areas and acknowledged that the retention of solar access to certain open space should not be the underlying driver of the built form. The resulting proposed amendments to the solar access provisions will facilitate the scale of development proposed for the OSD site, optimising the benefits of the Victoria Cross Metro Station. In taking this outcome-based approach to ensuring that appropriate amenity is achieved, it is possible to balance the requirement of maintaining amenity to the public domain with the ability of the CBD to provide for employment growth in a highly accessible and sustainable location.

The redevelopment of the site, and the broader North Sydney CBD precinct, provides the opportunity to establish new public amenity which can be achieved in many innovative forms. The detailed design of the OSD (or other developments in the precinct) could include innovative open space such as a public roof top garden to complement areas of ground level open space which no longer efficiently or effectively perform a role in context of the transformation of the area and competing planning objectives. Roof top or podium level gardens that can be made publicly available can provide excellent added amenity, including significant views toward the Harbour and would not be constrained by factors affecting ground level open space such as overshadowing and congestion. Examples of where this approach has successfully been implemented include the 100 First Street Rooftop in San Francisco and Sky Garden in London.

In this regard, we encourage an outcome-based approach to delivering public amenity in the North Sydney CBD to allow for new and innovative ways of delivering public amenity while not unreasonably affecting the overarching strategic objectives of the precinct and Sydney Metro.

Connectivity

The integrated Victoria Cross Metro and OSD applications propose a new at-grade through site link at the southern end of the site between Miller Street and Denison Street. This proposed link is supported as it will improve permeability around the station and complete the east-west connection between the 1 Denison Street development and the newly refurbished Northpoint Tower. This link could, however, be enhanced by providing a connection under Miller Street to avoid the heavy traffic at street level and to provide a direct link to the station arcade.

In addition to the Miller Street connection, the proposal provides a unique opportunity to establish a new pedestrian link under Berry Street to the proposed 'North of Centre' (NOC) Square. NOC Square is proposed to be located at the heart of the Ward Street Precinct and providing an underground pedestrian link would provide direct access between the station and this growing commercial precinct to allow workers and visitors to avoid traffic associated with the M1 on-ramp. The link would also create a focal point for pedestrians to activate NOC Square and help establish it as a destination of North Sydney and strengthen its role as a primary office market.

If actual underground connections are not proposed as part of the subsequent detailed application, the design of the OSD should be flexible to ensure that there is the opportunity to introduce these links in the future.

Berry Street Address

The indicative architectural scheme supporting the concept plan, orientates the ground floor of the building to Miller Street with all retail tenancies and the main OSD lobby opening toward this frontage (refer to **Figure 2**). The detailed design of the building should further consider the Berry Street frontage and seek to activate this street as well due to its role as a key east-west connection and due to its interface with the future Ward Street Precinct.

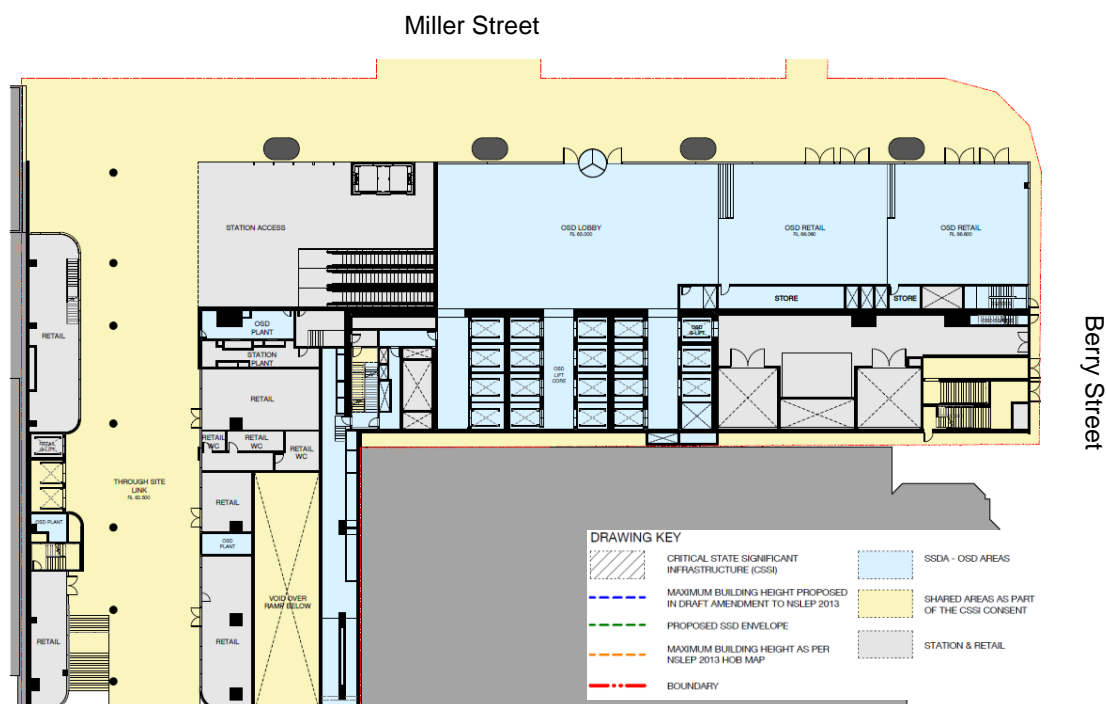


Figure 2 Extract of Ground Floor Concept Plan

Source: Transport for NSW

Strategic Planning Considerations

It is understood that Council are in the process of developing a revised draft Masterplan for the Ward Street Precinct. Given the strong connections of this precinct to the Victoria Cross Metro Station/OSD, and its important role in realising the objectives of the North District Plan, we encourage the Department to work with Council to accelerate the finalisation of the draft Masterplan and allow further engagement with land owners in the precinct and the wider community.

Conclusion

LIF Pty Ltd support the proposed Victoria Cross Metro OSD concept plan and is excited by the prospect of continued growth and transformation of the North Sydney CBD. The above submission raises a number of considerations to ensure that the OSD proposal and surrounding precinct deliver an optimal planning outcome given the substantial public transport investment of Sydney Metro.

The proposed concept plan should be flexible enough to allow future underground connections under Miller Street and Berry Street to avoid heavy traffic at street level. The location of the station provides a significant opportunity for a new underground connection under Berry Street to the proposed NOC Square which would provide a direct pedestrian link to heart of the future Ward Street Precinct.

The detailed design of the building should also further consider the provision of active uses along the Berry Street frontage given its interface with the future Ward Street precinct.

We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss this submission with the Department in their consideration of the SSD application and the planning for the wider Victoria Cross Metro and Ward Street precinct. Should you have any queries about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9409 4908 or cforrester@ethosurban.com.

Yours sincerely,



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