

27 June 2018
Annie Leung
Team Leader, Key Sites
Assessments

Via email –
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SYDNEY METRO: OVER STATION DEVELOPMENT
VICTORIA CROSS, NORTH SYDNEY
SSD 8874

Dear Annie,

In response to your letter of 22 May 2018 seeking GANSW comments for the above proposal, we have reviewed the information provided and provide the following advice and recommendations.

Generally

Most aspects of this proposal appear to be driven by commercial imperatives to achieve highest efficiency for greatest economic performance but there is no overarching rationale to support the extent of proposed increases to the building envelope, and how this will meet required outcomes.

As the proposed development would add to the cumulative impact of other North Sydney office buildings where envelopes have been maximised, any initiatives that offset the considerable impacts of the proposed envelope and contribute to the cultural and social amenity of the precinct, are strongly encouraged.

Impact on the amenity of existing residential development.

The proposed development significantly exceeds the permitted height prescribed by the North Sydney Local Environment Plan 2013 (NSLEP). It is noted that the Height Variation Request (Appendix EE) references the North Sydney Planning Proposal which permits amenity loss, provided that it does not exceed the minimum standards of the Apartment Design Guide (ADG). As a result of the proposed height, the building envelope appears to impact on the amenity of neighboring apartments, and extends as far as residential areas on the other side of the expressway.

Given the importance of improving liveability in the Sydney region, it is recommended that overshadowing impacts on existing dwellings be given greater consideration.

Proposed building envelope

The proposed building envelope includes some architectural features and modelling which should be reconsidered. These include:

- *architectural roof feature* - Architectural elevations in Appendix E show three fins, each approximately 3.5 storeys tall. While these are shown indicatively, it is recommended that building elements outside the building envelope not be permitted, due to the extent of height increase already under consideration.
- *Western stepping* - the outward stepping of the Miller Street façade, with upper levels of the building progressively projecting up to 4.5m over the footpath, should be reconsidered. This massing strategy impedes the sky view from Miller Street and creates an uneasy sense of the building towering over the public domain.
- *Southern planted sky gardens* - The Built Form and Urban Design Report describes sky gardens on each of the four sky terraces. The Wind Impact Assessment Report indicates that these gardens will be 'comfortable less frequently', requiring 'balustrades of at least 1.6m'. In addition, Appendix H shows that these terraces are largely overshadowed throughout the day, particularly in winter. It appears that the sky gardens will not be viable open spaces as proposed. This aspect of the proposal requires further consideration.

Wind impacts generally

According to the wind impact assessment report, the through-site link is likely to be relatively well sheltered by the buildings to the west of the site, but there is a risk that

westerly winds would be deflected by adjacent buildings and channel into the through site link. The report calls for computational analysis to identify the likelihood of this occurring, and whether further mitigation is required.

It is recommended that fundamental aspects of the design such as wind impact be further tested prior to consent being granted. It is further recommended that detailed environmental analysis be required to support any future EIS for this site.

Public domain strategies and through-link retail viability

According to the Built Form and Urban Design Report, *'the through site link ... will ... create a vibrant retail hub. High quality shop fronts will activate the new link creating attractive food and beverage retail opportunities'* (p.47). While GANSW supports these objectives, strategies to support them lack sufficient detail. The capacity of the proposal to offer retail units of sufficient amenity and utility to support the desired quality and vibrancy should be supported with planning, operational and commercial analysis.

Design Excellence

The Design Excellence Strategy as currently outlined in the EIS, is unlikely to provide highest quality outcomes. Concerns include:

- The jury role is undertaken by a Design Excellence Evaluation Panel (DEEP). DEEP membership does not specifically require design expertise (other than GA as panel chair)
- Design quality appears to be assessed concurrently with and balanced against other criteria such as operational and commercial factors, without the relative weightings being specified.

It is recommended that the strategy be reviewed to address the concerns above and in response to feedback provided by GANSW on 7th June. It is further recommended that the project be reviewed by the State Design Review Panel (SDRP).

Sincerely,

GA NSW



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