

Strata Committee for and on behalf of
SP56068, 252 Abercrombie Street Chippendale/Redfern

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Department of Planning and Environment
Attn: Director – Key Sites Assessments
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Director,

The Block
MP 06_0101 MOD 2 Pemulwuy Project Redfern - Concept Plan Modification

We make this submission on behalf of the owners of SP 56068, 252 Abercrombie Street Redfern which is in immediate proximity to the proposed *Pemulwuy Project*.

In general, we support the redevelopment of site of our neighbour, yet we have concerns related to the following issues at least that need to be addressed completely first.

1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ISSUES

The Director General's Requirements (Application Number 06_0101, issued 6 October 2006) do not appear to adequately address the archaeological potential of the Block. The DGs Requirements simply state that:

Heritage

A heritage impact statement of potential heritage impacts of the project on the site, buildings and existing archaeological items is required having regard to the Heritage Office guideline Assessing Heritage Significance. Specifically, the design and form of the proposal needs to respond, and assess any impacts on, the character of the adjacent Darlington Heritage Conservation area (under the former South Sydney planning controls). The statement it is to recommend actions to mitigate any impacts.

If any impact is anticipated on any archaeological relics, it is recommended that a research design for the proposed excavation should either be included in the Heritage Impact Statement or submitted as a separate document as part of the Environmental Assessment.

A heritage impact statement may examine the potential impacts on the "existing archaeological items", however, this does not address the potential for unknown or Aboriginal archaeological deposits to exist within the study area. A historical and Aboriginal archaeological assessment should be undertaken for the entire study area to determine the likelihood of archaeological deposits being located within the proposed Pemulwuy Project boundaries.

In the Environmental Assessment dated December 2011, it states that

Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners Pty Ltd have prepared:

- *a heritage interpretation plan relating to the site; and*
- *a heritage assessment of the impact of the development on the Railway Corridor retaining wall to the east of the site.*

However, no archaeological assessment has been undertaken. Given the importance of the Block to Aboriginal people and their ongoing occupation of the site, a detailed Aboriginal archaeological assessment should be undertaken of the entire study area by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist. A detailed historical archaeological assessment for the entirety of the proposed development area should also be prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

I note that the SEARs (06_0101 MOD 2 and SSD 8135, issued 6 October 2006 and modified 22 December 2016) include the following requirements:

11. Heritage

- *The EA / EIS should identify any listed or potential heritage items within the proposed project area. If any listed or potential heritage items are likely to be affected, a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines in the NSW Heritage Manual. The HIS should assess how the development would impact on any places of heritage significance in or surrounding the SSD site and how these impacts can be avoided or mitigated.*
- *The revised Heritage Impact Assessment (HIS) should include a view impact assessment, photomontages of the interface and visual impacts of the proposal as seen from surrounding streets, Lawson Street road bridge (over the railway lines), Redfern Railway Station's Lawson Street entry and surrounds.*
- *An historical archaeological assessment should be prepared by a suitably qualified historical archaeologist in accordance with the 2009 Heritage Division, Office of Environment and Heritage guidelines 'Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'. This assessment should identify what relics, if any, are likely to be present, assess their level of heritage significance and consider the impacts from the proposal on this potential resource. Where harm is likely to occur, it is recommended that the significance of the relics be considered in determining an appropriate mitigation strategy. In the event that harm cannot be avoided in whole or part, an appropriate Research Design and Excavation Methodology should also be prepared to guide any proposed excavations. This methodology should include appropriate actions to guide monitoring, stop-work provisions should relics be found, appropriate recording, storage and public display provisions for relics.*

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

- *The EA / EIS must identify and describe the Aboriginal cultural heritage values that exist across the whole area that will be affected by the development. This may involve the need for surface survey and test investigation. The identification of cultural heritage values should be guided by the Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW (DECCW, 2011).*
 - *Where Aboriginal cultural heritage values are identified, consultation with Aboriginal people must be undertaken and documented in accordance with the Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010. The significance of cultural heritage values for Aboriginal people who have a cultural association with the land must be documented in the EA / EIS.*
- 12. Traffic Impacts (Construction and Operational).*

While Natalie Vinson of Curio Projects has undertaken a brief archaeological assessment of Precinct 3, her investigation of the Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage significance of the site is not appropriate. The SEARs indicate that the assessment of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage be undertaken in accordance with the Office of Environment and Heritage's (OEH) *Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW*. These guidelines indicate that an analysis of the environmental context of the study area and a review of previous archaeological work must adhere to the requirements set out in OEH's *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*.

Any Aboriginal archaeological assessment undertaken in NSW should be undertaken in accordance with the OEH's *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*. The Code of Practice provides a prescriptive list of requirements when undertaking an Aboriginal archaeological assessment. These requirements include an analysis of previous archaeological work undertaken within or in the vicinity of the study area; an analysis of the environmental context of the study area to assist in preparing a predictive model of occupation for the study area; and a search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS). The *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* also provides a very prescriptive outline for the format of an Aboriginal archaeological assessment report, which has not been followed.

The report prepared by Curio Projects does not meet these requirements. There is no discussion of any previous archaeological work undertaken in the vicinity of the Block. No reference is made to an AHIMS search or any evidence of the AHIMS search results provided. There is no discussion of any registered Aboriginal sites within or in the vicinity of the study area, even though there is a registered Aboriginal site within 500m of the Block (AHIMS Site 54-5-2497). No analysis of the environmental context of the study area is provided, even though evidence suggests that the Block is situated on a highly significant sand sheet which extends from Botany Bay.

It does not appear that an archaeological assessment has been undertaken for the entire proposed Pemulwuy Project area, only the brief assessment of Precinct 3.

2. DARLINGTON HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA

The NSW Heritage Division's database listing for the Darlington Heritage Conservation Area (DHCA) provides a map which includes the area presently known as "The Block" within the DHCA. The Statement of Significance for the DHCA includes the following:

The area within the Darlington Conservation Area referred to as The Block is significant as one of the bases for Koori people in Sydney; it was one of the first pieces of land in urban Australia owned by indigenous people when it was purchased for indigenous housing in 1973. The Block has provided indigenous Australians moving to Sydney the opportunity to remain living in a community environment with extended family, living together, providing a support network. The sense of community is partially maintained by the time residents spend in the public spaces of the verandahs and Eveleigh Street. The layout of the houses and the street facilitates this community atmosphere. The media attention and visibility of The Block has helped in the national acknowledgement that it is a significant place. The Block is important to all Australians as a symbol of the ability of indigenous Australians to maintain their community identity in an urban situation. The struggle to gain ownership and control of The Block by the indigenous community was part of the movement by indigenous people during the 1970s towards self-determination. The Block is also significant for its association with many famous indigenous people who have been residents or associated with The Block including Shirley Smith (Mum Shirl) and Kevin Gilbert.

The area known as The Block does not appear to have any other heritage protection despite its national, state and local significance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities.

However, it would appear that during the review of the Sydney Local Environmental Plan, which was issued as the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP), the area known as The Block was removed from the DHCA. The LEP Heritage Map – Sheet HER_009 no longer shows The Block as included in the DCHA.

The removal of The Block from the DCHA would appear to be highly inappropriate given that this is the only heritage protection for The Block.

3. PROPOSED HEIGHT INCREASE FROM SIX TO 24 STOREYS

a. Shadows cast by the increased height of the building

The proposed modifications to Precinct 3 include the increase of the proposed height of the student accommodation building from the approved six storeys to 24 storeys. The State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005 Redfern-Waterloo Authority Sites – Height of Building Map (Sheet HOB_001) indicates that the maximum height for a building within the area proposed for Precinct 3 is five storeys.

A building of 24 storeys located on the ridge line adjacent to Redfern Station and the rail corridor is unsuitable. In this location, the building will overshadow the entire neighbourhood which is mostly comprised of two storey terraces.

It does not appear that updated shadow diagrams have been produced to indicate the impact of the increased height on shadowing of the neighbourhood.

The shadow diagrams numbered ODA056 B and dated June 2010 indicate that the six storey building will have a significant shadowing effect on the surrounding neighbourhood, particularly in the March/Sept 21 diagrams, which indicate that the building will cast a shadow approximately 100m west along Caroline Street. Increasing the height of the building four fold, will only increase the impact of this shadow and this is considered highly inappropriate.

Shadow diagrams for the proposed 24 storey building are not available on exhibition at this stage.

b. Increased pedestrian/vehicle traffic and parking issues

The initial approved proposal of a six storey building was to provide 154 bed spaces in 42 units and a manager's flat. The new proposal with the height increase to 24 storeys proposes 522 rooms accommodating 596 student beds. The impact of almost 600 students moving into the area has not been adequately addressed. No parking is proposed for the student accommodation building.

The increased population of residents in Precinct 3 does not appear to have been adequately addressed in terms of pedestrian and vehicle traffic and parking. The streets within and surrounding the area, Caroline Street, Eveleigh Street, Hugo Street, Louis Street, Caroline Lane, Lawson Street and Abercrombie Street are all narrow streets. Abercrombie St, the widest of these streets, only allows one lane of traffic in each direction. Traffic issues are constantly caused by vehicles double parking on Abercrombie Street, which decreases the flow of traffic in both directions.

Streets such as Caroline, Eveleigh, Hugo, and Louis Streets presently are only wide enough to allow one vehicle to travel in one direction. Two vehicles cannot pass each other on these narrow streets. Traffic is already an issue. Adding the extra residents, plus almost 600 students, will only add to the traffic issues in the neighbourhood.

Parking is also a significant issue in the Block. Already there is 1 hour restricted parking throughout the Block due to limited parking and its vicinity to the train station and university. Adding more residents without adequate parking will only increase the parking issues within the neighbourhood. The existing terrace houses in Caroline, Hugo and Louis Streets do not have off street parking, and providing insufficient off street parking, will only compound the existing parking issues.

4. INSUFFICIENT GREEN SPACE

The previously approved Pemulwuy Project was already lacking any public open green space. The addition of almost 600 students to the neighbourhood will only compound the lack of green space in the neighbourhood.

We have concern that this huge bulk of building works, then increased population, servicing of the population, energy of the movement of vehicles, bikes and people will remove our peaceful enjoyment and create significant density in a tight area within little space.

Your sincerely,

Messrs Tory Stening, Sue Lancaster, Jim Rodger & Ben Quinn – Strata Committee
For & on behalf of Strata Committee and the owners of SP56068
252 Abercrombie Street Redfern NSW 2016