

Environmental Impact Statement

The Environmental Impact Statement as referenced in the report prepared by BBC Consulting Planners states:

Heritage

Weir Phillips Heritage have considered the likely impacts of proposed new shelters on the Lower Concourse of the Sydney Opera House, on the significance of the site and on nearby heritage items/conservation areas and conclude that:

- **The proposed works will considerably improve amenity not only for people attending performances within the Opera House but also for people enjoying its unique location;**

Our Response

It is obvious that the proposed works will NOT improve the amenity for people walking from the escalators to the Opera House particularly during inclement weather where the only undercover access is through the Opera Bar. They will be subject to increased noise from an increase in the number of speakers from 19 to 28, and the larger surface area of the umbrellas. This increase of 55% will cause significantly more debilitating sound into the concrete walkway area where it will be unfortunately enhanced by the hard surfaces.

The acoustic report refers to sound recordings of 108dB to the north of the stage while independent recordings without music in the undercroft on a busy day is around 90dB. An increase of this level of noise is unacceptable for young children, pregnant women, and elderly who use this walkway to access the Opera House as this is the only undercover thoroughfare on windy, wet and cold days.

- **The proposed works are consistent with the Conservation Plan for the Site, the Management Plan for the site and Utzon's design principles;**

Our Response

The works proposed are NOT consistent with the Conservation Plan for the Site, the Management Plan for the site nor Utzon's Design Principles.

It will have a huge impact on the vista of and from the lower forecourt where Utzon's Design Principle very clearly specifies that the area should not be cluttered to obstruct the view of the Opera House and its significance in the harbour.

Reference is made to the SOH Conservation Plan by James Kerr p60 to re iterate this item of importance:

Furniture on the surrounds of the Opera House should:

- be strictly controlled in accordance with policies 3.2 to 3.5 to prevent the proliferation of items and retain the uncluttered aspect of the open areas;

- be located away from key visual features. For example, furniture should not be placed at the bases of the pedestals from which the shell ribs spring, nor should items obscure the bases of the lower forecourt columns (fig.44);
- be made of materials that will not result in damage to, or disfigurement of, the fabric on which the item sits. For example, the mobile sign introduced in 2000 was made stable by a heavy steel box base and, consequently, Sydney rain results in oxides staining the granite paving below. Also the former sites of some garbage bins show accelerated decay and discolouration. Both create maintenance problems;
- avoid excessive brightness and harsh tonal and colour contrasts with adjacent fabric. White umbrellas, tables and seating are, for example, highly obtrusive in a reconstituted granite setting and in direct competition with the tiled shells.
- **The proposed works will not block view corridors to/from nearby heritage items/conservation areas and will have no impact on the character of the setting of nearby heritage items/conservation areas because they are minor and visually recessive;**

Our Response

The proposed increase in the coverage of the umbrellas' by 55% will result in views from the lower forecourt to the Opera House sails and the Harbour Bridge to be lost. Please see photographs attached. This is in complete contradiction to Jorn Utzon's vision and Design Principles Document.

This is also contrary to the submission by the Australian Federal Government in support of the listing for the SOH by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

- **The proposed works are minor and do not give rise to a significant impact as it is defined by the Matters of National Environmental Significance Significant Impact Guidelines 1:1 and do not require a separate approval under this Act;**

Our Response

The proposed works are NOT minor as they clearly impacts the Opera House from all directions within the designated buffer zone created to ensure the conservation of this Significant Site. This note has significant importance for the listing of the Opera Houses. Should this development proposal gain approval, it will inevitably herald the beginning of further future negative impacts for our World Heritage Listed Iconic site.

The proposed buffer zone (438.1 hectares) has been designed to protect the property's universal values in relation to its setting on Sydney Harbour. The buffer zone centres on the inner waters of the harbour and includes places around the harbour within a radius of 2.5 kilometres that have been identified as offering critical views to and from the Sydney Opera House. ICOMOS considers that the proposed core zone includes all the physical components that express the property's outstanding universal values. The proposed buffer zone assures the proper management of the views from and to the Sydney Opera House. We believe that construction regulations should be implemented in order to assure the conservation of the present features of the shore landscape included in the buffer zone.