



10 December 2019

Director – Key Sites Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Our Ref: FP223
Your Ref: SSD-9653

Dear Sir/Madam

STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION – SHOWGROUND STATION PRECINCT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the State Significant Development Application (SSDA) for the Hills Showground Precinct (Government Land). The following comments are provided on behalf of Council:

- **Urban Design**

Built Form and Density

The proposed built form and density (1,900 dwellings) is of a scale which is beyond that envisaged under the applicable strategic framework and the concepts put forward by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as part of the Priority Precinct exhibition. As these plans were used to justify the rezoning of the site to Council and the community, there is a reasonable expectation that future development aligns with these outcomes. The delivery of yields more consistent with the outcomes previously exhibited by the Government through the precinct planning process (approximately 1,500 dwellings) would enable a more appropriate density and built form outcome to be achieved.

The SSDA concepts depict a relatively bulky built form with minimal modulation or variation in height across the site. The density is also considered to be too high for the site owing to the overwhelming bulk and scale presented. It is expected that a high profile development of this nature would provide exemplar outcomes of good building and development beyond baseline ADG minimum requirements. The North Ryde precinct and Lachlan's Line developments for example are not considered to be appropriate precedents to follow nor are they contextual and reflective of an appropriate future character for the Showground Precinct.

The proposal is seeking to maximise development potential at the expense of providing an attractive, varied and interesting built form. The concept currently resembles a high level feasibility proposal rather than a masterplan for higher density urban living providing high quality amenity dwellings and public domain.

In this precinct there are some sites worthy of being termed a landmark or gateway site. These sites such as the corner of Showground Road and Carrington Road should be expressive of their location and visual prominence on the site. Providing more variety in the height and form of the

towers should be considered in contrast to the dominant single height datum that is currently expressed.

It is further noted there are inconsistencies between the proposed building heights within the Urban Design Report (page 91) which includes some two and three storey elements in the Doran Drive Precinct and the Plans for Approval (Drawing No. SK7) which identify buildings ranging from four storeys to 20 storeys. Consistency between all of the relevant information is considered paramount if these documents are to be used to guide future built form outcomes.

Building Separation

The tower heights and lengths are such that the ADG minimum building separation of 24m is insufficient and consideration should be given to providing greater setbacks through the off-setting of towers so that distances of around 40m can be achieved. Distance separation of less than 24m between tower forms is inappropriate and fails to provide any certainty that a high amenity built environment is able to be achieved.

Urban Grain

The Urban Design Guidelines will not provide a 'fine grained' street frontage. For example, the Urban Design Guidelines (page 28) include a trigger for buildings to incorporate articulation at 50m of building length which is considered inadequate. It is recommended that a requirement be included in the Urban Design Guidelines, consistent with the Showground Precinct DCP, that for streets with a road reservation of less than 20m width the length of building facades shall not exceed 40m. A maximum building length control of 65m should be included for streets with a road reservation of 20m or greater.

Consideration should be given to how a finer grain street edge could be achieved to prevent the built form presenting as being monolithic and without a sense of human scale. Reference should be made to the current DCPs for Showground and Castle Hill North for guidance on how to better achieve a fine grained street edge.

Mid-Block Links

It is recommended that consideration be given to an additional through-site link within the Doran Drive Precinct to break up the built form and provide greater connectivity between the station area and the Castle Hill Showground. It is noted that the indicative layout plan within Council's Showground Precinct DCP requires a pedestrian link in this location. The Showground is expected to accommodate large events and additional through-site links would better accommodate pedestrians moving on mass between the Showground and the station. The resultant break in built form would also assist with reducing the visual bulk and scale of buildings.

Setbacks

Landcom is seeking to reduce minimum setback controls required for the site under The Hills LEP 2012 and The Hills DCP 2012 as summarised below:

The Hills LEP 2012:

Location	LEP Requirement	SSDA Proposed
East Precinct local street	5m	4.5m (podium) 3m (upper levels)

The Hills DCP 2012:

Location	DCP Requirement	SSDA Proposed
East Precinct (Showground Road)	10m (podium) 5m (upper levels)	3m (podium) 3m (upper levels)
East Precinct (De Clambe Drive)	5m (podium) 5m (upper levels)	3m (podium) 3m (upper levels)
East Precinct (Carrington Road)	5m (podium) 5m (upper levels)	5m (podium) 5m (upper levels)
East Precinct (setback to service box)	6m	Nil requirement

Location	DCP Requirement	SSDA Proposed
Doran Drive Precinct (De Clambe Drive and Doran Drive)	3m (podium) 5m (upper levels)	0m (podium) 3m (upper levels)
Doran Drive Precinct (Andalusian Way and Mandala Parade)	0m (podium) 5m (upper levels)	0m (podium) 3m (upper levels)
West Precinct	0m (podium) 3m (upper levels)	0m (podium) 2m (upper levels)

The minimum setback of 10m to Showground Road in the DCP seeks to respond to the busy nature of this Arterial Road. It aims to provide sufficient space for deep soil planting including larger tree species to ameliorate potential visual and acoustic outcomes and maintain a green and leafy character consistent with the Garden Shire identity. The larger setback also acknowledges the lower scale development on the opposite side of Showground Road.

In addition, the required upper level setbacks in the DCP (generally 5m) seek to ensure that taller building elements comprise a generous setback from streets to reduce building scale and bulk and provide ample sunlight access to the public domain.

The proposed reduced setbacks are not supported. The minimum setbacks within The Hills LEP 2012 and The Hills DCP 2012 were set as a result of detailed precinct planning completed by the NSW Government. These already vary substantially from Council's typical front setback requirements for apartment buildings of 10 metres (apart from Showground Road). These already reduced setbacks acknowledge the intended urban character of the area, whilst continuing to allow reasonable space for deep soil planting and larger tree species, increasing urban tree canopy and privacy and amenity for future residents. The setbacks established under the applicable framework also seek to enhance solar access to streets and reduce wind impacts – this is desirable from an amenity perspective in this high density area.

Where the street is defined as an active frontage, consideration should be provided to what uses may occur. It is recommended that appropriate setbacks be provided as per the existing controls to enable active frontages to be functional. Providing a zero lot setback on these frontages will prevent on-street cafe and dining opportunities from occurring as they will provide an impediment to the pedestrian path of travel. The established controls were put in place with due consideration of desired future uses and should be complied with.

It is also considered inappropriate to vary the requirements as part of a master plan approval, without any detailed concepts for individual buildings to justify the variation. It is noted that there would remain some scope for variation to setbacks to be considered on a case-by-case basis as part of future built form applications for individual buildings. This would allow for consideration of variations having regard to the detailed design of individual buildings, proposed land uses and specific opportunities and constraints afforded by individual sites.

Site Coverage

The proposed site coverage appears to exceed the maximum requirement under Council's DCP of 50%. This would be a contributing factor in the proposal exceeding the capacity of the site and is evident with the Precinct East common open space areas which are in shadow throughout the day on 21 June. The lack of solar access indicates that the proposed density is too high. It is not considered to be acceptable that the principal ground level open space for these developments receives no solar access on 21 June. Roof top gardens do not provide an acceptable substitute and present issues for children seeking areas for safe play. Full site coverage is unnecessary and inappropriate in an outer metropolitan station precinct.

Communal Open Space

Communal open space provision should demonstrate compliance with the requirements of The Hills DCP 2012 Part D Section 19 – Showground Precinct rather than the SEPP 65 Apartment Design Guide. Provision of play areas within individual communal open spaces should be considered to cater for the projected population, of which a high proportion will be children.

Solar Access

The bulk, massing and tower heights should be arranged so as to provide unimpeded solar access to proposed public open space locations including the existing station park for two hours on 21 June. For a proposal of this size, high quality public open space design is essential, in keeping with the place-making principles of high quality liveable urban places.

The shadow diagrams provided as part of the Urban Design Report indicate that the communal open spaces within the East Precinct will be predominantly overshadowed between 9am and 3pm on 21 June. Whilst the controls within The Hills DCP 2012 Part D Section 19 – Showground Precinct do not apply to State Significant Development Application, these controls establish Council and the community's expectations of future redevelopment within the station sub-precinct within the draft DCP. The proposed developments would not comply with the DCP requirement that developments shall achieve direct sunlight to the principal usable part of the communal open space for a minimum of two hours between 9am and 3pm on 21 June. It is noted that a reduction in density and greater variation in heights, as recommended previously, would likely assist with mitigating this issue.

Other SEPP 65 Matters

The following additional matters require further consideration and potential design revision to demonstrate meeting ADG objectives and design criteria:

- A number of apartments noted as meeting natural cross-ventilation are not in compliance with the acceptable design criteria as engineered solutions and ventilation shafts are not considered acceptable solutions; and
- Deep soil zones provided in front setbacks cannot be included in ADG summary of deep soil provision as a 6m minimum distance is required.

Active Frontages

The Urban Design Guidelines should require human scale activated street frontages throughout the precinct. Public and Private Interface Guideline No. 1 on page 36 of the Urban Design Guidelines requires ground floor residences to provide an elevated stoop no less than 1m and no more than 1.2m above the levels of the adjoining public domain. It is recommended that these metrics be amended to no less than 0.3m and no more than 0.6m to provide greater street level activation and reduced potential CPTED concerns.

Controls for active commercial street frontages should be included in the Urban Design Guidelines consistent with the active street frontage controls within Section 5.6 of Council's Showground Precinct DCP. It is critical that active frontages are oriented towards the Showground and potential synergies are explored at the interface between development on the Government land and future uses of the adjoining public land.

Street Trees

The urban tree canopy proposed is insufficient and will not attain 40% coverage targets set by the GSC and GANSW. It is recommended that a requirement be included within the Urban Design Guidelines for street trees to be spaced consistent with existing street trees along De Clambe Drive, Andalusian Way and Doran Drive.

Wind

Given the density and foot traffic expected for this site, it is recommended that wind controls be included in the Urban Design Guidelines to require buildings of eight or more storeys to be subject to wind tunnel testing at the development application stage and demonstrate the following:

- In open areas to which people have access, the annual maximum gust speed should not exceed 23 metres per second;

- In walkways, pedestrian transit areas, streets where pedestrians do not general stop, sit, stand, window shop and the like, annual maximum gust speed should not exceed 16 metres per second;
- In areas where pedestrians are involved in stationary short-exposure activities such as window shopping, standing or sitting (including areas such as bus stops, public open space and private open space), the annual maximum gust speed should not exceed 13 metres per second;
- In areas for stationary long-exposure activity, such as outdoor dining, the annual maximum gust speed should not exceed 10 metres per second; and
- The report is to be prepared by a suitably qualified engineer.

These controls are consistent with adopted DCP controls for the Showground Precinct and Castle Hill North Precinct. Consideration of the wind mitigation strategies as per the Wind Environment Statement prepared by Windtech should also be included as a requirement in the Urban Design Guidelines.

Building Materials / Finishes

Greater diversity is suggested for the building colours and finishes shown on Page 47 of the Urban Design Guidelines. Whilst it is acknowledged these intend to adhere to a specific theme, greater diversity including suggested finishes for architectural features would be of benefit to encourage greater visual interest in the built form.

Mix of Housing Typologies

The EIS and Urban Design Report refer to the provision of a range of housing (apartment) typologies. Whilst medium density housing forms such as terraces are not specifically identified in the plans, the provision of terraces or 'terrace edges' as per Council's adopted controls for Castle Hill North Precinct could be considered for peripheral locations.

Design Excellence

Concern is raised regarding the design excellence strategy and consistency of built form outcomes if different consent authorities and Design Review Panels are utilised. The Sydney Central City Planning Panel and Council's Design Review Panel which comprise of members with suitable local knowledge and expertise should have a role in assessing all future built form applications.

Whilst Landcom has established its own Design Advisory Panel, it is unclear as to the weight and relevance of this panel's recommendations in relation to the proposal. There is no coherent strategy in place to ensure the recommendations are followed and considered, and there is no transparency in the process for members of the general public or Council to review the findings of the DAP against the design proposal put forward.

Reference should be made in the Urban Design Guidelines to the criteria within Clause 9.5 of The Hills LEP 2012 which was put in place by DPIE when the LEP was gazetted in 2017.

Design Excellence Guideline No. 2 within the Urban Design Guidelines (page 8) should be removed. Council officers are not involved in the design of individual buildings and development lots. Council has a Design Review Panel comprising three highly skilled and experienced design professionals approved by the Government Architect. The Design review panel provides design advice to applicants and Council officers.

Level of Detail in Urban Design Guidelines

As the concept approval will effectively constitute a site specific DCP (in satisfaction of Clause 9.4 of The Hills LEP 2012), the Urban Design Guidelines should include sufficient detail to guide the final built form outcome. The guidelines need to have a level of detail equivalent to a DCP and should be expanded to provide guidance on additional matters such as:

- Unit mix and apartment size - future apartment development should comply with Council's housing mix and diversity criteria, as specified within Clause 7.12 of LEP 2012;

- Common and private open space;
- Public domain character and treatments; and
- Required parking rates.

Proof of Concept

It is recommended that the proof of concept be peer reviewed by a Government Architect-approved consultancy to ensure its quality and accuracy.

Plans for Approval

As a key purpose of the SSDA is to lock in the permissible GFA for each of the future development lots, it is recommended that the maximum GFA and yields for each lot be included on the 'Plans for Approval'. This would be consistent with the proposed approach for the SSDAs for the Bella Vista and Kellyville Station Precincts (Government land).

▪ **Local Infrastructure**

Social Infrastructure Assessment

With regard to social infrastructure, the EIS relies on the Community and Open Space Study prepared by ARUP in support of the precinct planning for the Showground Precinct. It is not considered appropriate to rely on this study as the yields being sought through the SSDA significantly exceed those anticipated for the site as part of the precinct planning. In light of the higher yields that are now intended to be achieved under the current proposals, further consideration needs to be given to social infrastructure requirements to ensure that the future residents are adequately serviced with parks, community facilities, schools etc.

Cattai Creek Embellishment

The SSDA does not include any details with respect to the revitalisation and embellishment of the portion of the Cattai Creek Corridor adjoining the site (Lot 51 DP 1253217). Works to this land have been the subject of ongoing discussions between Landcom and Council and it is expected that any works required on this land will be undertaken and / or funded by Landcom or future developers.

Lot 57 DP 1253217

A parcel of land adjoining the Castle Hill Showground (Lot 57 DP 1253217) which is owned by Sydney Metro is currently being used to provide parking for the Showground and metro station. It is expected when no longer required by Sydney Metro that this land will be amalgamated into the adjoining Showground, at no cost to Council, as a critical portion of this facility which will in part support the future population on the subject site.

Community Facility Floor Space

The EIS submitted with the SSDA notes that the provision of community uses within commercial floor space will be subject to further discussion with Council as part of future detailed DAs. It is not considered acceptable to defer the resolution of this matter to future detailed DAs. Rather, it is critical that the SSDA identifies how the development will address increased demand for community facilities and establishes a mechanism to secure delivery of community facility GFA as part of any concept approval.

Doran Drive Plaza

A clear and unimpeded path of travel should be provided through the Doran Drive Plaza as a key route accommodating pedestrians travelling between Castle Hill Showground and the station, particularly at times when events will bring large volumes of pedestrian through-traffic. Additional space may be required to facilitate the range of activities expected to be accommodated within this busy pedestrian thoroughfare.

Detailed design of the embellishment of the plaza must be undertaken in consultation with Council, particularly if it is intended that this space be publicly dedicated.

Precinct East Park

It is recommended that the proposed Precinct East Park comprise an area of at least 0.5ha consistent with the minimum area for a local urban park as per Council's adopted Recreation Strategy.

A 70% tree canopy as recommended in the Urban Design Guidelines is ambitious for a park which is largely overshadowed. Consideration of public amenity is required as well as precedents of what a park with a 70% tree canopy would look like - the precedent images illustrated are not reflective of what is proposed and potentially fail to achieve a 20% tree canopy. As an example Rouse Hill Town Centre currently achieves a 10-20% tree canopy.

Schools

The additional population will contribute significantly to the demand for a school within the Precinct, which has not been identified. The Government imposed a cap of 5,000 dwellings within the entire Showground Precinct, until such time as the need for additional education infrastructure has been resolved by State Government. The proposal would exhaust nearly 40% of this yield on Government-owned land alone, without any solution to this regional infrastructure issue being established. The subject site represents the key remaining area of Government-owned land within the Precinct and it is strongly recommended that the development be revised to incorporate a new school on the Government-owned land in order to overcome this issue which was identified during the Precinct Planning Process.

Public Domain

The Urban Design Guidelines should include a requirement to give consideration to the relevant provisions of Council's Public Domain Plan for the Showground Precinct.

Delivery Mechanism

With respect to local infrastructure, the SSDA notes that the proposal makes provision for the Doran Drive Plaza (1,400m² GFA) and a new public park (3,500m²). Whilst it is assumed these facilities would be provided by Landcom or future developers and dedicated to Council, no mechanism has been proposed by Landcom to facilitate this.

A mechanism to secure the funding and / or delivery of all infrastructure required to support the proposed development must be established at the concept development application stage, as a critical outcome of any SSDA approval. It is expected that Landcom (and/or other developers) will be responsible for the full costs of the provision of all new infrastructure required to support the development including the matters identified above and the payment of contributions under the applicable Contributions Plan No. 19 – Showground Precinct. No approval should be granted prior to such a mechanism being established between Landcom and Council.

▪ **Relationship with Castle Hill Showground**

Future development will need to give strong consideration to the relationship between the subject site and the Castle Hill Showground. The proposal must have regard to the interface between future development and the Castle Hill Showground and demonstrate clear access and linkages between the two areas. Consideration should be given to verge widths, building setbacks, location of outdoor dining areas, pedestrian and cycling connectivity and view lines through the site. Future active frontages proposed (potential "eat-street") should be oriented towards the Showground and potential synergies between future uses of the adjoining public land should be explored. This requirement should be included within the Urban Design Guidelines which will guide future development on the subject site.

Landcom should also engage with Council with respect to future opportunities for partnering on investment into the Showground as this will service, and add value to, future development on the Government-owned land.

▪ **Subdivision Plan**

Clarification is required with respect to the proposed subdivision plan. It is understood the proposal seeks to subdivide Lot 56 DP 1253217 to create three development lots, one public space lot and one lot to be the future road. Roads cannot be dedicated to the public until they are constructed. If the intent is for the road to be delivered upon the eventual development of one or all of the development lots then it should be included as part of those lots and dedicated later when built.

- **Traffic and Parking**

Road Hierarchy

The existing roads constructed by NRT are designated as local roads and the new road dissecting Lot 56 DP 1253217 is also a planned local road, however SK 06 distinguishes it from those other, existing local roads. Care should be taken to ensure the design of the new Precinct East street will present a uniform and logical profile with the existing streets already constructed by NRT.

Street Profiles

With consideration of the proposed density and foot traffic expected for these precincts, the street profile for the new Precinct East street should include generous footpaths to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movement. At a minimum a 2.5m shared path should be required on one side. 1.5m street verges with street trees at 10m spacing are also recommended.

Car Parking

Concern is raised with respect to the proposed parking rates (0.6 – 1.5 spaces per unit, 1 visitor space per 10 units, 1 space per 145m² of commercial gross floor area and 1 space per 130m² gross retail floor area). It is recommended that parking rates for residential flat buildings be included within the Urban Design Guidelines which are consistent with Council's housing diversity provision (Clause 7.12 of LEP 2012 - 1 space per apartment and 1 visitor space per 5 apartments). It is further recommended that parking rates be considered for commercial and retail uses which are more in line with Council's current DCP requirements (1 space per 40m² for commercial uses and 1 space per 18.5m² for retail uses).

Parking exit points have not been identified, though it is assumed these may be combined with parking entry points. Clarification should be provided in this regard.

Parking should not occur within building setbacks and should be contained within the building footprint (preferably basement or suitably screened from the public realm). This should be included as a control within the Urban Design Guidelines.

- **Water Management**

Flooding and Stormwater Management

Flooding and overland flows within the subject site under developed conditions should be demonstrated in addition to existing conditions within the precinct and Cattai Creek. Consideration should be given to orderly development and identification of any constraints in relation to the existing and proposed stormwater network required to be provided. As per Council's Showground Precinct DCP, stormwater runoff must be treated on the development site before it discharges to a public drainage system.

An indicative layout plan of the proposed stormwater network, stormwater treatment / management measures and overland flowpaths is required.

The proposed stormwater network level of service is required to be demonstrated to ensure compliance with Council design standards.

Flows draining from the eastern portion of the site to the intersection of Showground Road and Carrington Road are to consider the RMS proposed stormwater network upgrades in that immediate locality.

It is stated in Section 4.7.1 of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy that scour protection shall be installed at each drainage outlet to the Creek to minimise erosion. However, no discharge locations have been proposed or indicated in the concept proposal. Proposed or likely discharge locations to the creek need to be identified.

It is stated in Section 4.7.3 of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy that discharges to Cattai Creek would require implementation of a surface water quality monitoring program. Further information is required in this regard detailing why monitoring is required, what parameters are to be monitored and who would be responsible for the monitoring, noting that Council does not conduct a water quality monitoring program.

All future development applications should demonstrate compliance with industry standards and Council requirements with respect to water management.

Infrastructure

Biofiltration swales proposed in a road verge, intended to be owned and managed by Council will not be supported. Swales and tree pits need to be contained to the development lots noting they treat runoff from those lots (not the road areas already addressed as part of the previous station works).

Likely locations of proposed Gross Pollutant Traps should be demonstrated with detail as to who would be responsible for the ongoing management. Any cartridge filter treatment devices proposed to be owned and managed by Council will not be supported. Additionally, pit inserts i.e. enviropods, oceanguards or similar, are not generally supported where Council is responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance.

Gross pollutant traps are only required as an end-of-line item whereas Precinct East is at the top of the catchment that drains to the existing road network which already deals with gross pollutants before discharging to the open channel and basin constructed downstream by others. The Strategy relies on the open channel and basin constructed downstream by others, without considering whether the modelling and reporting that informed the design of that open channel and basin considered this additional runoff from a developed catchment. This needs to be more closely considered, as supplementary on-site stormwater detention may be required. A plan / sketch showing the existing and proposed stormwater management measures in the context of the subject site that speaks to the Strategy is needed.

All stormwater management and treatment infrastructure / devices are to be provided with appropriate inspection and maintenance access.

MUSIC Modelling

MUSIC modelling created for the concept proposal has not included roads. Roads proposed in the development are required to be included in the MUSIC modelling in support of the SSDA. The MUSIC set-up needs to be provided to demonstrate the source nodes and proposed stormwater treatment train that has been modelled. This set-up should also be indicated on a site plan to indicate the location of source nodes, treatment devices and receiving nodes.

In reference to Appendix A, A3.4 Bioretention Measures of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy, the bioretention parameters modelled in MUSIC need to be amended for the concept proposal. Specifically, any bioretention system is to be lined and contain an underdrain. Additionally, review and clarification or amendment is required in regard to the nominated value of 'Unlined Filter Media Perimeter' being 0.01m. An amended MUSIC model is required to demonstrate achievement of pollutant reduction targets for the proposed development.

- **Waste Servicing**

All future roads must be able to accommodate Council's standard 12.5m long Heavy Rigid Vehicle (AS2890.2) to circulate the road network. Waste collection is unlikely to be supported in narrow laneways (less than 10 metres total reservation width). This requirement should be included as a control within the Urban Design Guidelines.

A control should also be included within the Urban Design Guidelines that where roads terminate, a cul-de-sac turning head with a minimum diameter of 19 metres must be provided to enable efficient waste collection with no reversing. A further control should be included that all developments should provide for on-site waste collection either at grade or via a basement and waste collection vehicles must be able to enter and exit the site in a forward direction.

- **Approval Pathway for Future Development Applications**

Should future built form applications for individual sites follow the State Significant approval pathway, concern is raised that this will override Council's Development Control Plan and established local approval processes. It is recommended that future development applications be assessed through the established local approval framework, against the concept SSDAs as well as Council's DCP to ensure high quality development outcomes and a standard of liveability consistent with other high density locations throughout the Shire. This approach will also ensure that future applications are assessed by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel and Council's Design Review Panel which comprise of members with suitable local knowledge and expertise.

If you have any questions in relation to this matter please contact Nicholas Carlton, Manager Forward Planning on 9843 0416.

Yours faithfully



Michael Edgar
GENERAL MANAGER