

APPENDIX D INDEPENDENT URBAN DESIGN REVIEW

Urban Design Review



ATC Royal Randwick Racecourse – Hotel Development

October 2013

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1. Introduction

GM Urban Design & Architecture (GMU) has been engaged by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DP&I) to review the State Significant Development proposed by the Australian Turf Club for the Royal Randwick Racecourse - Hotel Development.

The proposed development is located on Alison Road, Randwick and it includes a hotel with 170 rooms and ancillary facilities such as a restaurant with bar, conference and meeting rooms and a pool deck. The proposed development fronts Alison Road and is located within the Spectator Precinct defined by the Royal Randwick Racecourse Development Control Plan.

The proposal was submitted in June 2012 and then publicly exhibited by the DoP&I from 1 August 2012 to 31 August 2012. A number of issues were indicated in the submissions received by the DoP&I. The Applicant attempted to address the issues and proposed a revised design in the Response to the Submissions Application submitted in November 2012. In response to this amended design GMU was appointed to undertake an independent urban design review the proposed development. In February 2013, GMU issued a document outlining the primary urban design issues identified regarding the amended design and the massing of the proposed facility.

Since that time there have been two workshop meetings with the Applicant to discuss further amendments to address the remaining urban design issues. These discussions have led to the Applicant providing further amendments to the proposal, described and documented in a Design Addendum Report which was submitted to the Department of Planning & Infrastructure in September 2013.

The following Urban Design Review report provides a review of the final amended proposal provided by the Applicant in response to the issues raised during the design review process. It also provides an in-depth opinion on the proposal's urban design response to the context. This review concentrates mainly on the form and design of the building. Based on the brief from the DP&I, the site's proposed zoning is not a subject of this review.

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Documents reviewed in arriving at the views expressed in this report
- Consideration of the site and its context
- Summary description of the original scheme as proposed
- Summary of the main issues with the original proposal raised in public submissions
- Summary of the key amendments offered by the applicant in response to submissions
- GMU review and issues for the amended scheme by the applicant

1.1 Documents reviewed

In preparing this report, GMU has reviewed the following applicable controls and documents describing the proposal and its context:

- Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Urbis, dated 27 June 2012, with the appendices as follows:
 - Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements
 - Site Survey by Rygate Surveyors
 - Architectural Plans and Design Statement by Tonkin Zulakhia Greer Architects
 - Schedule of Materials and Finishes by Tonkin Zulakhia Greer Architects
 - Landscape Plan by Aspect Studios Pty Ltd
 - Arboricultural Report by TLC Tree Solutions
 - Ecologically Sustainable Development report by WSP Built Ecology
 - Environmental Management Plan by The Australian Turf Club Pty Ltd
 - Existing Services Report by WSP
 - Contamination Report by Douglas Partners
 - Traffic Impact report by Parking and Traffic Consultants
 - Construction Management Plan by the Australian Turf Club
 - Noise Impact Assessment by Acoustic Logic

- Engineering Services Concept Design Report
 - Aboriginal Heritage and Archaeological Assessment by AHMS
 - Heritage Impact Assessment by GB & A
 - Water Management Report by Brown Smart Consulting
 - Geotechnical Report by Douglas Partners
 - Functions and Events Management Plan by Australian Turf Club
- Submissions received during the public exhibition held between 1 and 31 August 2012 by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, which included:
 - 11 public submissions
 - 12 submission by public organisations and agencies
 - Response to Submissions prepared by Urbis, dated November 2012, with the appendices as follows:
 - Response to Submissions by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure dated 17 September 2012 with attachments 1 describing the issues raised in the submissions
 - Proponent's Response to Submissions
 - Architectural Plans and Photomontages by TZG Architects
 - Statement of Heritage Impact by GB & A
 - Architectural Design Statement by TZG Architects
 - Addendum to the Royal Randwick Racecourse Functions and Events Management Plan – by The Australian turf Club
 - Urban Design – Thermal Comfort – Technical response by WSP Buildings
 - Solar Reflectivity of External Facade – AECOM
 - Parking and Traffic Report – Parking and Traffic Consultants
 - Stormwater and Drainage Addendum – Brown Consulting
 - Submissions to the Response to submissions received by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure as follows:
 - Heritage Branch, Office of Environment and Heritage
 - Transport Sydney Buses
 - Randwick City Council
 - Australian Turf Club – Royal Randwick Racecourse – Hotel Development – Design Addendum Report

GMU have also reviewed the applicable controls and guidelines applicable to the site, which are as follows:

- NSW State Plan
- Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036
- Draft Inner Subregional Strategy 2007
- Development near Rail Corridors and Busy Roads – Interim Guideline
- Department of Planning Guidelines for Walking and Cycling 2004
- NSW Government Floodplain Development Manual 2005
- Randwick Local Environmental Plan 1998
- Royal Randwick Racecourse Development Control Plan 2007

1.2 The site and its context

The racecourse and the subject site are located approximately 4.5km south-east from the Sydney CBD. The Royal Randwick Racecourse (RRR) is owned by the NSW Government and operated by the ATC (Australian Turf Club) under a 99 year leasehold.

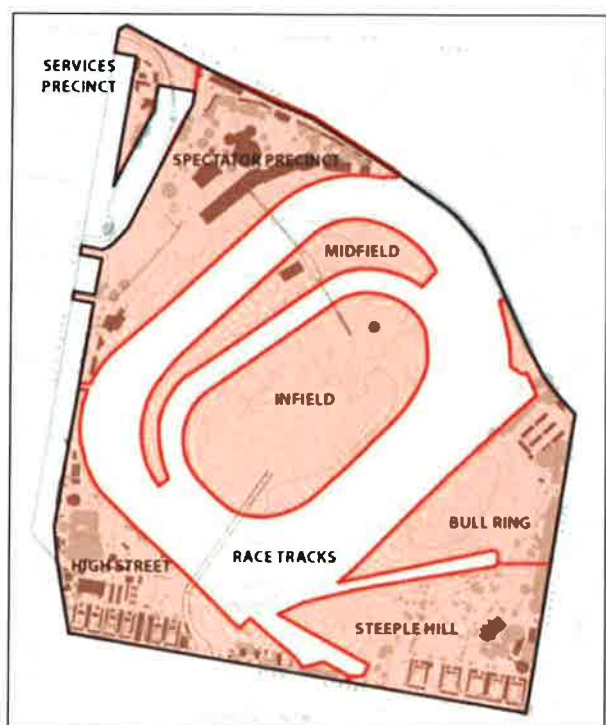
Historical context –

The Royal Randwick Racecourse is a historic site located in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs near Randwick and Kensington Village Centres. It is bound by two major roads – Alison Road along the north-eastern edge of the racecourse and Anzac Parade to the south-west. The Royal Randwick Racecourse covers approximately 80ha of land. The area chosen for the proposed development site is a triangular area located in the northern end of the racecourse. It covers an area of 9,000sqm and it is situated in the eastern end of the 'Spectator Precinct' as defined in the Royal Randwick Racecourse Development Control Plan.

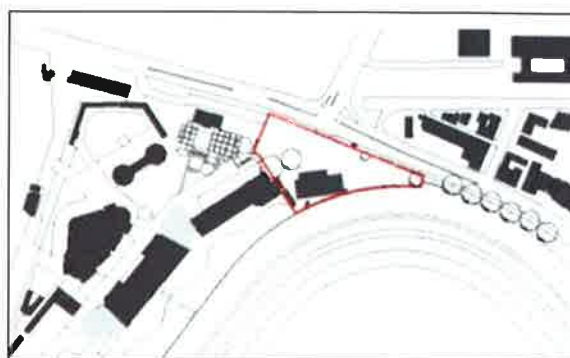
The Royal Randwick Racecourse is a historical place associated with horse racing since 1830s. Racing was popular in Sydney since beginning of the Australian colony. The racing at Randwick officially opened in 1833 with the track then called 'Sandy Course' due to its sandy surface, which contributed to the track deteriorating soon after the opening. Between 1840s-60s the track was used for training only while the official races were moved to Homebush. The Randwick Racecourse has been reopened in the 1860s and became headquarter of the Australian Jockey Club (AJC) now Australian Turf Club (ATC).

The RRR has unique cultural landscape landmark qualities and a distinctive architectural composition with a historical connection of the racecourse to a major band of regional open space that incorporates part of the large Sydney Common Area set aside by Governor Macquarie for recreational use for the people of Sydney.

The RRR is identified as a site of state heritage significance by the State Heritage Register Committee, but is not added to the State Heritage Register.



Map 3 of the RRR DCP 2007 outlining the precinct zones



Site area outlined in red with existing site and surrounding figure ground

The site's context -

The site is located on the southern corner of the Alison Road and Darley Road intersection. The northern boundary of the subject site runs along Alison Road and it is opposite to the southern end of Centennial Park.

This part of Centennial Park includes green recreation areas and water features (Maidens Row, Ash Paddock, Kensington Ponds and Equestrian Grounds to the north). A walking and running track called Maidens Row, which is on the south-west side of Centennial Park runs along Alison Road northern edge up to the intersection of Darley and Alison Roads opposite the subject site.

Centennial Park is one of the most popular recreation areas in Sydney and it has a high social significance at a regional level. Together with the Royal Randwick Racecourse, it creates a large open space and recreation hub in the Sydney's highly urbanised Eastern Suburbs. The site's location on the opposite corner of the street intersection to the park indicates that the development will be highly visible from the recreational areas of the Centennial Park.

The area along the northern edge of Alison Road east from Darley Road includes mainly mixed use developments which vary in height and built form typology. It includes 1 storey dwellings and up to 6 storey mixed use buildings. There is also a 9 storey apartment building located on the eastern side of Alison Road further south from the site (approximately 450m away), which is out-dated and of low aesthetic quality. This development is unusual in the immediate context of the racecourse.

The tallest building in close proximity to the site is a 7 storey TAFE building located on the corner of Darley Road and King Street about 150m north of the site. Further north from the site and north of the TAFE building is the North Randwick Heritage Conservation Area. This area extends along Darley Road and Centennial Park's south-west boundary. It includes mainly Federation and Inter-War housing associated with the development of Centennial Park.

The Randwick shopping village is located approximately 1.2km east from the subject site (along Alison Road) and it includes a shopping strip and other services including a cinema.

The area to the south of the subject site is the racetrack including the inner ring, which is used for parking on race days. The southern end of the racecourse (south-east and south-west) contains the stables and other maintenance buildings facing High Street to the south and Wansey Road to the south-east. The grounds of the University of New South Wales (UNSW) are located to the south of the racecourse along High Street. The Prince of Wales Hospital is also located to the south of the racecourse and in the south-east direction from the university area.

The area of the existing stables (far east across the racecourse from the subject site) has an approval for redevelopment into a contemporary stable and training facility with 6 two-storey buildings, with places for 100 horses each and 12 two-storey mechanical horse walkers and parking.

A heritage building known as the Official's Stand is located immediately to the south-west of the subject site. The Official's Stand is a heritage item of exceptional significance. The building is a three storey classic federation style grandstand and it was originally constructed in 1886. The height of this building reaches approximately 15m. The other existing buildings to the south-west from the subject site include Administration Building, Totalisator Building, Randwick Pavilion (Betting Pavilion), Tea House, Security office and other Australian Jockey Club facilities.

The area further south-west from the subject site was recently redeveloped. The site, previously known as Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Stand and Paddock Stand, was recently renovated and expanded. It is currently known as Grandstand, located approximately 120m west from the subject site fronting the main field along the 410m straight run with the finish line directly opposite the Official's Stand to the east. The Grandstand is similar in height to the previous QEII Stand and it is 7 storeys tall with a cantilevered roof structure extending beyond the main building height, reaching 34m in height at RL 65.435.

The Grandstand redevelopment included the following:

- Demolition of the Paddock Stand and construction of a new seven level stand plus basement;
- Refurbishment of the seven storeys high QEII stand;
- Amphitheatre-style parade ring to establish the "Theatre of the Horse" on the western side of the stands;
- Three storey Owners and Trainers building overlooking the "Theatre of the Horse" parade ring;
- Amenities block;
- Adaptive re-use of the historic Swab Building for conference, museum, café, equine gallery and members' registration office;
- Extensive landscaping improvement to the public domain;
- Demolition of the Randwick pavilion and Teahouse.



Redevelopment of the former QEII Stand with extension to the west. The subject site of the hotel is located at the end of the race track.

The subject site -

The subject site is triangular shape of approx. 9,000sqm area located in the north-eastern corner of the racecourse, immediately to the east from the north-east Official's Stand building. The longest boundary of the site is fronting Alison Road to the north-east and includes the remainder of the Turnstile Building Wall and Gate, consisting of 4 gate towers and a brick wall, which are listed as heritage. The southern boundary of the site follows the curve of the track. The western side of the site is determined by the extent of the existing heritage Official's Stand building.

Currently the site is occupied by a marquee, two steward's towers and a WC block. There are 4 trees on the site, three of which are Port Jackson Figs marked in the arborist report as highly valued for retention. The fourth tree, which is a Silky Oak assigned with low value and it is not considered of sufficient significance to warrant extensive efforts for retention.



The subject site - from Alison Road with the existing marquee on the site.



The subject site with heritage fig trees.



The subject site from the south-east (Alison Road) with Grandstand in the background.



Heritage Turnstile Wall and Gate fronting Alison Road on the north-eastern side of the subject site.

Context summary -

The subject site is located at a prime location visible from Alison Road and Centennial Park. The area surrounding the racecourse is a mixture of different buildings varying in scale, height and typology. There is a clear pattern in the structure of the open spaces in Sydney where the Centennial Park connects to the racecourse combining the recreation and sport events areas as a hub. The proposed location of the subject development is directly between those two main open spaces in the urbanised area of Randwick and Kensington. The site is also located at the end of a visual axis along Alison Road when approaching from the City before the road bends towards the Randwick Shopping Village to the east.

The chosen location not only includes a number of gates, but also acts as a gateway marker for the racecourse. The eastern edge of the racecourse consists of a row of Fig trees and a wire fence along the perimeter of the footpath. The racecourse area is visible from the street and from the footpath along Alison Road. Any development on the subject site will be visually dominant and visible from many vantage points.

The location, significance of the place, surrounding heritage elements and landscape context indicate that any proposed development on the subject site needs to display a high level of design excellence suitable as a landmark of the Royal Randwick Racecourse, a prestigious sport facility.

Any height and shape of built form in the proposed location will be seen as a flagship/showpiece marking the entry to the Royal Randwick Racecourse and the Randwick Council area due to its visibility and proximity to the public domain. A view and green corridor also exist from and to the Centennial Parklands. The site is also visible from the south-eastern side of the course track, especially from the taller buildings such as UNSW library that currently have views towards the City and Centennial Park.

The Royal Randwick Racecourse is currently undergoing a major redevelopment. The proposed development on the subject site and other approved and under construction developments will deliver better opportunity for RRR's visitors to enjoy the day at the races as well as providing appropriate facilities for horses and training. The proposed development will add economic benefit to the ATC and ensure use of the racecourse facilities on the non-race days as well.

2. The proposed scheme and the review process

The application for the Royal Randwick racecourse includes a Development Application for construction of a hotel and ancillary facilities and a Planning Proposal for rezoning. The original scheme has been amended due to issues raised during the public exhibition and documented in the Response to Submissions submitted in November 2012. The proposed changes have been further discussed and reviewed by the DoP&I and by GMU. The current and final design has been submitted as a result of this review in a subsequent Design Addendum Report.

The following subchapters include a description of the original and amended proposals and the general issues found during the preliminary review. The final design, which is a result of the review, is discussed in the next chapter in more detail.

2.1 The original scheme

In general, the original application for the proposed development sought the approval for the following:

- Partial demolition of the Alison Road boundary fence, brick toilet block, two steward towers located in the site's area and a marquee – temporary structure;
- Re-use and conservation of the former Turnstile Building/Wall;
- Construction of a new eight storey building, which accommodates a hotel with 170 rooms, a bar, restaurant and conference facilities with additional spaces needed for the mentioned uses, such as kitchen, storage rooms, etc.
- Construction of one level of basement car parking for 50 vehicles;
- Construction of a swimming pool on the third level;
- Landscaping and public domain works;
- Removal of two trees – one of them being a Fig Tree, indicated in the Conservation Management Plan as tree of an Exceptional heritage significance;
- Business identification signage; and
- Construction of new outdoor bar facilities to the west, outside of the main building, adjacent to the existing Official's Stand building to the west.

The Original proposal:

The original scheme for the hotel and ancillary facilities on the subject site included a free-form podium and a hotel structure above the podium supported by a number of columns. The podium was designed as a 3-storey, curvilinear and irregular form sheathed in steel vertical glazing fins and glass infill. The steel fins are painted in dark grey colour. The design suggested that the verticality of the podium structure was intended to blend with the verticality of the hotel columns surrounding the podium.

The dominant part of the proposal as intended is the hotel component. The form as proposed was 5 storeys (17m) and approx. 100m long. The depth of the hotel wing was approximately 19.5m and the podium underneath the hotel was approx. 32m deep. The podium structure was aligned with the edge of the southern facade of the hotel wing and extended beyond the northern facade by approximately 13m towards the street.

The setting of the proposal and the shape of the hotel structure when seen in plan appeared as an extension of the existing elongated forms along the north/west side of the racecourse track. The shape of the proposal was not intended to relate directly to either the curvature of the racetrack or the edge of Alison Road.

The hotel wing structure was to be supported on 10 columns contained within the irregular podium building and 17 columns beyond the podium structure. The podium and the hotel wing structure were elevated by approximately 2m above the street level due to flooding issues. The elevated platform was used partly as an extension of the terrace area provided for the restaurant in the southern side with view to the racecourse. This elevated platform obstructed the direct view toward the racecourse from the public domain.

The podium and the hotel wing were designed as independent forms. The shape of the podium did not relate in plan or form to the hotel wing above. The length of the podium building when seen from the street elevation was approx. 55m. The hotel extended beyond the podium to the east and west by 18m and 26m respectively. The justification for the undercroft was to allow visual permeability to and from the racecourse to Alison Road, Centennial Park and Darley Road.

Height:

The proposed total height was 8 storeys and the building reached RL 64.4 (30.8m plus approx. 2m for the raised ground floor level).

Setbacks:

The structure of the podium platform was proposed as close as 1.5m to the street boundary. The hotel structure extended directly above one of the gate towers of the Turnstile Building/Wall. The Turnstile towers were proposed to be re-used as storage with a secondary access pathway. The Turnstile Wall with the heritage gates were not intended to be used as an entry to the site.

The setback to the heritage Official's Stand located to the west of the site was approximately 23m from the hotel wing and 50m from the podium.

GFA, usable area and number of rooms:

The proposal's Gross Floor Area was 11,109sqm and the building included 170 rooms in total (34 rooms per level), including studios, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom suites, facility areas such as meeting rooms and Conference and a restaurant - 188.66sqm. A single level of car parking was proposed in the basement.

Entry area and street activation:

The main entry to the building was located on the north-west corner of the site with a porte-cochere. The location of the entry was partially oriented toward the street to assist with passive surveillance of the street and the entry zone. There were no active frontages for the remainder of the street.

Materials and finishes:

The materials and finishes proposed for the development was different for each part of the proposal and included steel sheathing and timber as well as a 'glazed wrap', - a flushed laminated curtain wall, with a pattern printed on the interlayer. The graphic chosen for the facade was be an abstraction of equine imagery altered digitally in green and blue colours. The southern facade of the hotel structure was glazing with glass balustrades.

The columns supporting the hotel wing structure were metal steel with paint finish in the same colour as the metal vertical fins of the podium structure in dark grey. The exterior of the staircases was designed as a 'green wall', clad in mesh. The underside of the hotel structure, which would be visible from the street, was to be finished with metal cladding in silver/grey colour.

The proposal included a corporate logo on the Alison Road and racecourse facades. The signage was internally illuminated displaying the name 'Adina' with a maximum height of 3m and 12m in length next to the words 'Royal Randwick' which would also be 3m high and 26m wide. The signage extended beyond the plant by 0.89m.

2.2 Main issues raised in the submissions

The proposed development was submitted to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure in June 2012 and put on public exhibition from the 1st to 31st of August 2012. Submissions were received from local residents (public submissions) as well as from public and private organisations and agencies. A description of the main issues and concerns received from each of those groups are listed and discussed below.

Public submissions

There was a total of 10 public submissions of which 9 provided a critical opinion regarding potential negative impacts while one public submission from an anonymous resident expressed support for the proposal. This represents a reasonably low number of submissions given the size of the proposal.. The main issues discussed in the public submissions were as follows:

- Use
 - The potential for change to residential uses in the future if the hotel proved unviable.
 - The lack of public consultation regarding the design and the use of space prior to lodging the application. The proposed change to the current use of land as open space and a recreation area (current LEP zoning) and its role in extending the open space extension of Centennial Park.
 - The proposed use as a hotel which as a use is not strictly related to racing.
- Location
 - The obstruction of the current access from Alison Road, which is needed for bigger events and for maintenance of the infield area.

- Visual impact
 - Concern over potential glare from the front elevation which would affect motorists travelling along the street.
 - Potential view impacts were raised for residents along King Street.
- Traffic and Parking
 - The changes to the signalised intersection of Alison Road and Doncaster Avenue were not supported due to the proposed additional access to the RRR (right turn) and the new use potentially increasing traffic flow and the proposed right turn lane causing additional queuing and traffic jams.
 - Insufficient car parking spaces.
- Bulk and scale
 - The dominance of the bulk and height in combination with the external appearance and proximity to the boundary which would not be screened by the existing trees along Alison Road.
- Heritage concerns
 - The design is out of place and overwhelms the heritage Official's Stand immediately next to the proposal.
- Safety and security
 - Concern was expressed about the proposed alcohol dispensing facilities, and potential increases in violence.
- Noise issues
 - Potential noise generated from the swimming pool terrace.

Local Government and private institutions' submissions

In addition to the submissions from individual residents and residents' groups, public agencies, government institutions and private companies submitted their opinions and concerns about the proposed design. Submissions were received from the following agencies:

- Department of Planning and Infrastructure
- Crown Lands
- Environmental Protection Authority
- A.G. Coombs
- Heritage Council of NSW – Heritage Branch
- NSW Police
- Randwick Council
- Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)
- Sydney Buses
- Sydney Water
- Transport NSW

These submissions raised a variety of urban design concerns. These included:

- The design of the underside of the hotel structure and the columns with staircases, should be designed in a more sculptural form;
- A lack of articulation on the front facade;
- Unsatisfactory art work on the front facade lacking a distinctive and transcending style without the visual interest of a landmark development;
- The general bulk and scale and disproportionate building elements;
- The relation in height and scale to the TAFE building and the new Grand Stand, which were thought to be unrepresentative of the general scale and character of the area;
- The odd realignment of building components;

- The location of signage above the façade not being compliant with the DCP and
- A potential wind tunnel effect at the third level terrace area.
- The failure to retain the Fig tree, replanting and replacement with other;
- A recommendation to prepare a Landscape Impact Statement outlining the relation of the proposed landscape layout to the 'place' and retention of significant aspects and elements of the existing landscape layout;
- A concern about the scale of development and setbacks to the heritage significant Official's Stand, a request for a visualisation of the racecourse seen from the south to compare the proposal to the scale of buildings on the course;
- Streetscape and public domain issues:
 - Lack of activation to the street (Alison Road) with all 'back of house' rooms oriented to the street;
 - Scale relative to pedestrians generated by the 33m height abutting the street on the corner of the building and
 - The potential amenity at the ground level beyond the podium due to the over-sailing hotel structure.
- Visual impact issues:
 - The podium design detracting from the appreciation and enjoyment of the existing view due to over-sailing of the hotel structure and

The submissions received by the DoP&I outlining the issues listed above were summarised in a comprehensive letter requesting the Applicant to provide a Response to Submissions Report. Preliminary review of the original proposal by DoP&I indicated the following urban Design issues:

- Bulk & Scale
 - The appropriateness of the reliance on the scale of the Grand Stand and the TAFE building to justify the height and bulk of the proposal;
 - The relationship to the Alison Road streetscape and a suggestion for the redistribution of building mass;
 - The over dominance within the historic setting;
 - Views across the site when viewed from the surrounding areas;
 - The opportunity to reflect the curved nature of the racecourse track, and
 - Reduction of the bulk of the roof top plant.
- Urban Design
 - Re-evaluation of the design to achieve a 'landmark building' reflecting the cultural and historic nature of the RRR and its contextual setting;
 - Redesign of the proposed development taking into consideration all comments arrived from Randwick City Council, the NSW Heritage Council and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, in particular;
 - The location of back of house and relation to Alison Road;
 - Appropriateness of the facade treatment in terms of internal comfort, landmark status and relation to the heritage items in the area, and
 - Concern about the glare that could affect drivers travelling south-east on Alison Road and Darnley Road.
- Signage
 - Incorporation of signage into the building facade using a sympathetic size, design, colour and illumination compatible with the site's status as a Conservation Area.

2.3 Response to the submissions

DoP&I provided a letter outlining the main issues in August 2012 and requested the applicant address the submission issues.

In response to the submissions and the DoP&I letter, the Applicant prepared a Response to Submissions Report. The Applicant included revised and additional architectural drawings and perspectives and relevant specialist reports addressing the issues raised during the exhibition period. Additional information requested for the further assessment and determination of the proposal was also provided.

The amendments to the proposal included as part of the Response to the Submissions were as follows:

Underside of the hotel structure:

Changes to the underside of the hotel structure included:

- Relocation of columns on the eastern and western ends of the building to increase the cantilever of the upper floors of the building by 2.5m;
- The stair cores' design was amended to include an enclosure similar in design to the facade of the podium with a continuous steel mesh planter screen and steel fins, and
- The introduction of a new reflective metal material and cladding system applied to the undercroft soffit with a linear effect of expressed joints used to add additional interest and increased opportunities for catching reflections.

Signage:

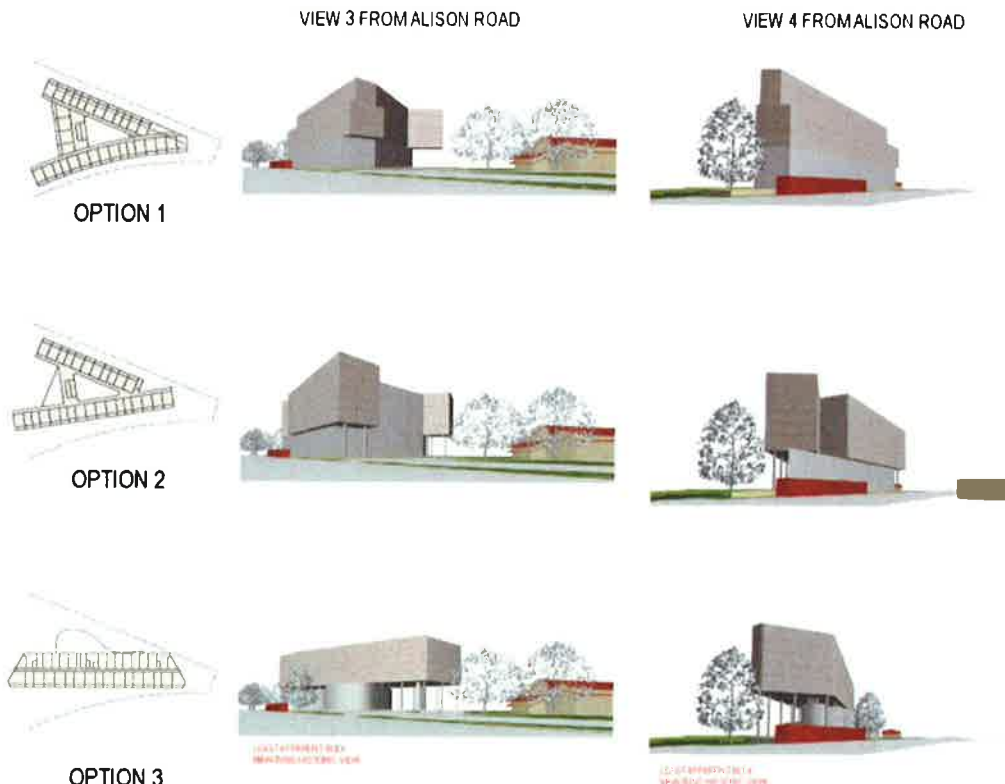
The changes to the proposed signage included:

- Signage on the street facade - removal of rooftop signage and relocation to incorporate part of the previously used logo into the facade on upper level (8th storey) below the edge of the parapet. The signage on the facade was shortened from the 'Adina Royal Randwick' to 'Adina'. It was also reduced in size from the height of approx. 3m to no more than 2.5m.
- The part of the logo, which included 'Royal Randwick', was moved to the front gate along the footpath on Alison Road and incorporated into the footpath fencing. The total height of the wall including the logo was amended to 3.6m, with a 1.5m steel wall, 2.1m height steel lettering painted in the same colour as the fence wall and a landscape hedge behind the lettering. The wall included the Australian Turf Club logo and a temporary-lightweight structure above announcing the upcoming event with a height of 6m.
- The hotel logo facing the racetrack was reduced in height to 2.5m high.

Additional information provided in the response to submissions:

The Response to submissions report included the site area and side setbacks and also the design options that had been considered as part of the process. These options included:

- Option 1 – Triangular form built to Alison Road and curved to the racetrack. Hotel rooms were built around a central atrium, sitting on a podium above the floodplain, and setting down to the street. The basement car park had an entry above the flood level with a total floor area of 12,870sqm. The floor area per level was 2,290m².
- Option 2 – Similar triangular form built to Alison Road and the racetrack, but without a curved structure aligning with the racetrack. The hotel rooms were located along the central atrium as in Option 1 with a total floor area of 11,640sqm. The Floor area per level was 1,940m².
- Option 3 - Curvilinear podium with landscape curtilage and rectilinear hotel rooms above with similar footprint to the official stand, separated by one level. Total floor area was 9,450sqm and the floor area per level was 1,890m².



The 3 massing options provided in the response to submissions

Option 3 was the preferred option by the Applicant as it provided the best outcome for the site with lesser bulk and scale and greater permeability.

Turnstile Building / Wall

The Response to Submissions Report included an additional Statement of Heritage Impact by GB & A which concluded that the proposal was appropriate for the site and that its bulk and scale will not impact on the neighbouring heritage items. The statement included an opinion that the main element defining the Racecourse Heritage Conservation Area is the racecourse itself as the oldest and longest continually operating course in Sydney.

The heritage consultant also concluded that the proposal was sympathetic to the adjacent former Turnstile Building/Wall, by 'enhancing opportunities to appreciate the significance and function of this building'.

Front facade

A 'Solar Reflectivity of External Facade' Report by AECOM was also included. This study confirmed that there are areas on the front facade that could result in high levels of solar glare at certain times and therefore the solar reflectivity of the material used on the facade should be further studied to ensure there was less than 17% external reflectivity in any materials proposed

2.4 Preliminary design issues and recommendations

The 'Response to Submissions' report and amended proposal as well as the original submissions and the proposal were the subject of GMU's preliminary review in January/February 2013. As a result of that review GMU identified the following remaining key issues and provided some design change recommendations to the proposal.

As part of this review GMU concluded that the proposed development of a hotel, bar and restaurant was of general economic benefit for Sydney and the Randwick area and revitalisation of the Racecourse and its site was supported.

The proposed location had the potential to mark the entry to the Racecourse and to Randwick itself, but the proposal needs to achieve a design that creates a landmark seen from many vantage points including Alison Road. Positive elements in the amended proposal included the conservation works for the former Turnstile Building/Wall and the intent to address the Racecourse and acknowledge existing views from the public domain was also positive. The overall design approach also was considered to have the potential to create a dynamic and exciting termination to the Spectator Precinct. However as part of the initial review some elements of the design were identified as requiring further design work to achieve a more sensitive and appropriate outcome. GMU identified the following main issues and potential amendments that could be considered including:

Height, bulk and scale:

- GMU agreed that there was some justification for the proposed height due to local precedents such as the TAFE building and the future Grandstand. This sort of scale was considered appropriate for the part of the built form that addresses the racecourse. The proposed crescent form was also considered appropriate as it reinforced and terminated the end of the racecourse. However, this scale was not considered sensitive to the character of Alison Road or the heritage gate (Turnstile Building/Wall).
- The precedent buildings cited by the applicant to justify the scale were all located away from Alison Road and did not benefit from a strong relationship to either Alison Road or to the public domain.
- The scale and grain of Alison Road required a lower and finer scale and the design solution needed to create a dialogue and response to this scale rather than seek to extend the scale of the racecourse buildings to Alison Road.
- The proposal 1.5m setback of the proposal from the footpath and over-sailing the heritage gateway was considered inappropriate and too dominant.
- The façade, particularly to Alison Road, did not create an appropriate form due to its bulk, scale and 'blunt' form.
- The long horizontal dimension of the suspended hotel accentuated the bulk and scale of the built form. This form when located so close to Alison Road, created a dominant and confronting form. Such a scale and form was more appropriate toward the racecourse.
- Other elements of the proposal including the podium with columns and the gap between the podium and the hotel as well as the raised ground floor and the chosen façade treatment overly highlighted the horizontality of the form. This created a rather monotonous and heavy structure and exacerbated its bulk.
- While the introduction of graphic art as part of the curtain wall was an innovative concept, the continuous glazed curtain wall with a repetitive graphic interlayer of abstract shapes highlighted its length and horizontality and it blunted the form at the end particularly where it was visible to Alison Road. It also bore no relationship to the character of the street/area. This would have been less of an issue, if the building was not in such close proximity to the street, but even so, more visual interest was required.
- The extensive repetition of the race horse graphic motif was not considered to be successful as it reduced the legibility of the design making it difficult to discern the underlying equestrian theme.
- The flat unarticulated nature of the façade exacerbated the bulk and length of the building and did not achieve any relief of the visual mass.
- The proposal did not relate well to the materials existing along Alison Road.

Recommendations suggested by GMU to address the issues included:

- An increase to the setback of the hotel component from both the heritage gate and Alison Road. This setback should maintain the sense of enclosure to the racecourse track but should be sufficient to ensure the hotel could be perceived as more of a background element relative to Alison Road.
- A greater curtilage should be provided around the heritage gate so that it can be fully appreciated.
- Review of the materials used particularly in the base of the building to achieve a better scale and materiality relative to Alison Road.
- Reshaping and modulation of the building ends to reduce the apparent bulk of the proposal.
- Further development of the Alison Road façade including development of the graphic artwork to be used within the façade.

Lack of address to Alison Road:

- The proposal was thought to present a unique opportunity to align with and respond to both Alison Road and the racecourse. This could be achieved by an interesting juxtaposition of forms generated by the need to respond to both.

- The proposal already attempted to celebrate the separate elements of the built form (podium and the hotel wing) by rotating the hotel wing to respond to and 'enclose' the race track, which was thought to work quite successfully. However the podium form was poor in its relationship to Alison Road and the gateway. It effectively turned its back on the road and gates rather than engaging and responding strongly in its design, form and alignment to both.
- The podium's curved form did not create a strong relationship with the more traditional rectilinear forms seen along Alison Road. Whilst this in itself this was not thought to be fatal to the proposal, the form in combination with its negative address to Alison Road created a major urban design issue.
- Alison Road and the heritage gateway, should be celebrated by the proposal more fully through its design.
- The level of the proposed entry ramp and landscape were above ground level and created blank walls and ramps being the primary address to the public domain when seen from Alison Road and the surrounding context.

Recommendations suggested by GMU included:

- Redesign of the shape and location of the podium, the entry ramp and landscaping to allow the podium to engage with Alison Road and also utilise and engage with the heritage gate. The gate in combination with an at-grade plaza or terrace area could provide access to uses within the podium if not the main hotel entry point.
- Adjustment of the alignment of the podium to respond directly to Alison Road.
- The form of the podium should be adjusted to locate additional volume to the street.
- Integrate the heritage Turnstile Building as a gateway to the site and the overall built form.
- Adjust the design of the terrace areas and carpark to retain a view to the racecourse through the heritage gates and congregation space adjacent to the gates.

Lack of activation to Alison Road:

- While the proposed hotel facilities would create renewed interest and commercial activity in the area, the proposed development did not engage with the street in terms of its form and expression or provide activation to Alison Road.
- The elevated ground floor level above the car parking level and the level difference of some 2m resulted in blank walls or landscape terraces which occupied the primary frontage of the site.

Recommendations suggested by GMU included:

- Redesign of the podium to provide an active frontage to the street and the parklands by relocation of active uses such as cafes, restaurant etc. along the podium so that they are visible to and can be entered from Alison Road.
- The reconfiguration of the hotel entry and lobby to have some engagement with pedestrians directly along Alison Road.
- Reconsider the ground level of the podium to create a better interface with the street.
- Absorb level changes within the podium itself and not via blank walls outside the building.
- Reduce the visual exposure of the vehicle ramp relative to Alison Road.

The suggested public domain views and the proposed design of the undercroft:

- The context analysis provided as part of the application had a brief discussion on the immediate context. It did not however provide the urban design study/master plan that was recommended to guide development envelopes for the site and precinct as required in the DCP.
- As part of this analysis two view corridors were identified including the view in the DCP - from the alignment with Darley Avenue and a view from the northern end of the street along Centennial Park but slightly away from the intersection.
 - Appropriately the analysis recommended retention of the view from Darley Avenue as required by the DCP. However, it was unclear why the proposal chose to retain the second view corridor identified in the study whilst not preserving other views from locations such as Centennial Park's or from the gates 6 and 7 (Turnstile Building) which are recognised as historic views in the DCP.
 - The initial concept for the form of the building appeared to have been driven by the opportunity to retain these view corridors. However the proposal in its detail no longer retained the identified view corridors. This concept led to the raised hotel structure on columns to allow a view through to the racecourse.
 - However the reality of this view was heavily constrained by the elevated basement, terraces, podium ground floor and entry point. This was further exacerbated by the landscaping in raised planters at the entry. The 2m solid structure above the existing terrain blocked the view to the racecourse from the Alison Road footpath and carriageway as well as potentially from the park.

- The location of the columns in combination with the fire stairs also significantly reduced the permeability of the view even above this level to a point where the value of the “retention” of these views became questionable.
- It is acknowledged that the proposed built form attempted to consider the historic however it was not clear from the documentation provided exactly where this view corridor sits in relation to the site and whether it in fact exists under the hotel or to the side of it.
- The original concept had the potential to allow for the preservation and continuity of views in a reduced way across the site, but the sheer scale of the suspended hotel structure significantly dominated the view. Rather than framing the view which was perhaps the original intention, the resolution of the columns, the solid shafts and the raised form of the podium appeared to block a great percentage of the existing visual connection to and from the parklands.
- The site specific DCP indicates that the visual landscape connection from the site across Alison Road to Centennial Park is to be enhanced and maximised. It was thought that the landscaped ramp system did not achieve this outcome and should be reconsidered. The heritage tree could perhaps be relocated within this landscape band to create a better address to the hotel entry and also respond to the landscape connection requirement of the DCP.
- In GMU's opinion a decision needed to be made as to whether these additional views were important and therefore to be retained or not. Their retention would require a major redesign of the hotel to truly preserve these views.
- Study of the corridors identified by GMU showed that these views were in fact already restricted and did not justify retention whilst the view identified in the DCP was in fact past the extent of the proposal and would not be impacted by it.
- The exposure of the underside of the hotel structure indicated that the proposed solution did not create visual interest and the stair structures did not contribute positively to the public domain character of the building.

Recommendations suggested by GMU included:

- Study and montages of the true value of the identified views
- If not retained development of the base of the building to provide greater visual interest and drama rather than the current treatment. If retained a true cantilever should be provided so that the view was preserved free of obstruction. Examples of other developments illustrating these principles were provided to assist the applicant
- Greater articulation to the undercroft of the hotel given its degree of exposure within the development as well as to the public domain. Expression of the beams or a more sculptural form for the undercroft would assist in its visual impact.

Failure to retain part of the site's existing heritage significant landscape:

- While the proposal had attempted to maintain the majority of the trees on site and proposed innovative improvements to the landscape quality along Alison Road, the proposal did not provide any documentation demonstrating any attempt to retain the existing heritage Fig tree as indicated in the Conservation Management Plan and the site specific DCP, which describes this tree as a tree of Exceptional Heritage Significance.

Recommendations by GMU included:

- Consider the relocation of this tree as part of the entry sequence to the site or along the street boundary to maintain a landscape quality to the site's edge and connection with the park.

Non-compliance with site specific DCP:

- The DCP requires that prior to any development an urban design report should be prepared to establish the best possible outcome for the site in terms of the massing and built form characteristics.
- Such a study was not provided as part of the original proposal and this was perhaps part of the reason why the proposal did not adequately relate to its surrounding context.
- As part of the amendments to the application an urban design study should be prepared to fully explain the generation of the building envelope and its relationship to the surroundings and to investigate any further development of those relationships.

2.5 The design review and amendment process

The applicant was provided with the summary of issues identified by GMU at a meeting on 19th February 2013. The changes to the design agreed at that meeting were:

- **Setbacks, bulk and scale:**
 - Increased setback to the building from the boundary without any increase in the height of the hotel or further impacts on existing heritage trees
 - Reshaping of the ends of the building with a different and further developed architectural expression to reduce the visual bulk.
 - Removal and reconfiguration of the podium to move it away from the heritage gates and provide public access to the raised terrace areas as well as maintaining a view to the racecourse.
 - Investigation into realigning the podium to improve the relationship to Alison Road and reconfiguring the landscape treatment to improve outcomes.
- **Undercroft area:**
 - The porte-cochere and undercroft area would be further developed and treatment of the columns including the number, location and extent would be considered
 - Further development of the egress stairs to improve their visual presence and contribution to the built form and minimise their visual intrusion.
- **Activation to Alison Road and relation to the Turnstile Building/Wall:**
 - Uses would be relocated to improve the activation to Alison Road and public access to terrace spaces.
- **Facade finish and the equestrian graphics:**
 - It was proposed that the graphic motif would be developed further, placing particular attention to the extent of its overall façade coverage, lighting effects, glare, acoustics, long term durability and maintenance.

A further meeting was held on 12th of March, 2013. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the amendments and to highlight any remaining issues prior to the final submission.

As a result of these meetings and further investigations the following improvements were achieved prior to the final submission:

General improvement in the interface of the podium to Alison Road:

The improvements included the following:

- Extension of the terrace along Alison Road including seating along the street edge boundary.
- An additional set of stairs to access this platform directly from Alison Road which enables the access to the hotel building from three points along the Alison Road footpath including one through the heritage gates.
- Opening of the space inside the building to the Alison Road frontage by the use of bi-fold doors opening to the new terrace space to the north.
- Provision of an entry through the heritage gates which provides a direct access to the terrace and it activates this part of the podium.
- Improved visibility to the racecourse. It was determined that while it was not possible to lower the podium to the ground level to allow for direct view from the street to the racecourse through the gates, this new pedestrian access and the changed shape of the platform allowed to enjoy the view of the racecourse partially through the gates and from the now more accessible terrace. This area of the terraces was previously blocked by the elevated platform behind the gates and no access was provided.
- Relocation and alignment of the podium was deemed not possible due to structural considerations and the operation of the uses within the building base.

General improvement to the appearance of bulk and scale:

- A new profile was developed along the building's side elevations, which created dynamic and interesting form in comparison to those of the previous design.

Remaining issues not addressed as part of the sketch response included:

- The underside of the hotel and stairs, which did not yet achieve the outcomes discussed at the first meeting.
- The unchanged use of the equestrian graphic motif on the ends of the building, which highlighted the overall bulk.
- The treatment to the podium at the heritage gates especially with regard to the location of columns and the entry points including a potential public space with the accessible views to the race track.

The meeting concluded with an agreement on additional amendments required for the final design.



3. Urban Design Review

3.1 Description of the final proposal

The Applicant's project team including Urbis and the project's architects (Tonkin Zulakhia Greer) have prepared a Design Addendum Report submitted in September 2013. The report states that it has been prepared as a response to the GMU's 'Key Points of Comments/Issues and Recommendations for the Royal Randwick Racecourse – Hotel Development' provided to the Applicant earlier in February 2013. The contents of this document were discussed and summarised in Chapter 2.4 of this report. Key issues presented in that report were also discussed with the Applicant at two subsequent meetings held at the DoP&I. The details and outcomes of these discussions are outlined in the previous chapter (Chapter 2.5) of this report.

Appendix A of the Applicant's Design Addendum Report includes the Architectural Drawings and the ATC Design Report which shows each of the changes in a schematic way supported by a description. The report also provides visual analysis with photomontages of the amended design from the vantage points along Alison Road and Darley Road.

The main changes stated in the Addendum report include the following:

- *Relocation of the building 2m to the west and 1m to the south from the previously proposed building footprint location and away from the existing heritage gates fronting Alison Road.*
- *The reworking of the ground plane and pavilion's internal uses to increase activation of Alison Road through the reshaping of terraces, ramps and landscape, including additional pedestrian space at street level up to 12m wide around the existing bus shelter.*
- *Provision of access to the hotel through the heritage gates.*
- *Provision of operable and transparent windows to Alison Road façade of the hotel kitchen.*
- *Remodelling of the eastern and western facades to articulate the ends of the building and create reshaped wings.*
- *The reworking of the façade motif restricting its extent to the Alison Road façade only.*
- *Columns and stairs have been remodelled between the bedroom wing and the ground plane and appear more sculptural and are no longer enclosed.*
- *Minor internal changes to the hotel foyer.*
- *Planting of new trees adjacent the access road and porte-cochere from Alison Road.*
- *Minor modification and reconfiguration of the basement and car park resulting in no net loss to parking.*
- *Realignment of ramps on Level 2.*
- *Internal layout changes on Levels 3-7 to reflect the modulation to the eastern and western wings of the building.*

The following images illustrate the main changes that occurred to the overall design during the review process:



The original design – May 2012 - view from the east along Alison Road



The final design – August 2013 - view from the east along Alison Road



The final design – August 2013 - view from the west along Alison Road (left) and from the undercroft area - new publicly accessible area (right)

3.2 Development compliance with the applicable controls

The main relevant urban design oriented planning instruments, controls, policies and guidelines applicable to the proposed development and the proposal's level of compliance are described below:

NSW State Plan 2021

The NSW State Plan 2021 includes a direction for the state establishing targets for increased tourism including growth of employment an increased participation in and an increased number of sport and cultural events in Sydney from 2010 to 2016 by 10%.

The proposal follows the aims and targets of the NSW State Plan 2021 in terms of tourism and employment targets.

Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036

The RRR is included in the 'Global Economic Corridor' and next to a long-term corridor for investigation (transport and urban renewal).

The proposed development marks a significant site in the eastern suburbs along with the potential long term development of the area and corridor. The response of the proposed development is aligned with the development expectations of the Global Economic Corridor. It will assist in activating and contributing to the Global Economic corridor and renewal of this precinct.

Draft East Subregional Strategy 2007

The Strategy describes Randwick as a Specialised Centre with education and health as the main roles of the centre. UNSW and the various hospitals in the area provide perfect opportunity for research, employment and business. The Royal Randwick Racecourse is described as one of *'a few key sites such as the La Perouse Peninsula, Centennial Parklands and Randwick Racecourse which form an open space hub with a large variety of uses attracting people to the site from all over Sydney.'* The RRR adds to the cultural diversity of the area; however, it isn't the main point of development. It does, however, establish an open space corridor 'hub' together with Centennial Park, Moor Park and Queens Park.

The proposal's compliance:

The overall development of the RRR increases the capacity and provides better services to the racecourse, which will be a better outcome for the area in terms of services and employment opportunities. Although the proposal will provide for temporary accommodation (service apartments), it is not considered to contribute to the housing targets. Due to the specific location in-between the large open spaces (Centennial Park and the RRR), it is crucial for the proposal to respond to this location. The proposed changes to the original scheme assist in addressing these outcomes by:

- Provision of uses that will attract people to the site and reinforce its role as a major tourist attraction for Sydney. The amended proposal improves the activation of the proposal to Alison Road and awareness of other uses provided by the proposal which should improve the potential patronage of the scheme relative to these goals.
- the increased connectivity of the public domain and the racecourse through the additional access points to the site and to the viewing platform making additional views to the racecourse available to the public;
- the amendments associated with the heritage gates and the view available through the gates;
- the changes to the proposed landscape design especially with the increased number of trees and changes to the type of feature trees.

Randwick Local Environmental Plan 1998 (Randwick LEP 1998)

The subject site is zoned 6A (Open Space Zone) under the Randwick LEP 1998, which doesn't permit a hotel use. The development proposal also includes a Planning Proposal (lodged in April 2012), which seeks rezoning to enable uses such as motel, serviced apartments, hotel and function centre to be permitted on the subject site. The Randwick LEP 1998 also includes controls describing the tree preservation order and requires the proposed development to demonstrate the need for development. It also asks the Applicant to describe the impact of the proposed development to the existing and future use of the site and oblige the future development to meet the requirements of Earthworks, Site Specific DCPs, Contamination and Heritage Conservation as per the relevant standard.

The proposal's compliance:

The proposed use is prohibited by the current LEP zoning. The relevance of the change of use will be considered specifically by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The proposal does however contribute to use of the site by the public and tourists and will reinforce its role within the economic corridor.

Regarding tree preservation order the proposal does not intend to retain the fig but rather proposes replacement of the heritage tree (No 45 – Fig tree) with three Hill's Weeping Fig trees along the front facade. The maturity of the relocated trees is not specified in the report.

It is recommended that the maturity of the replacement figs be specified to achieve the most mature examples possible given the site location, ground conditions and constraints for immediate growth.

Randwick Draft Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Randwick Draft LEP 2012)

As mentioned above, the application includes a Planning Proposal that seeks amendments to the current LEP as well as to the draft LEP upon future gazettal. The application seeks a change to the Draft Randwick LEP 2012 to include uses such as: tourist and visitor accommodation, food and drink accommodation and a function centre.

The proposal's compliance:

The draft LEP height map shows height limited to 12m on the land directly across the subject site (north of Alison Road) and to the west. A height of 9.5m is allowed along the eastern boundary of RRR (Wansey Road) and 24m along the southern boundary on the UNSW site (High Street).

Taller development exists in close proximity to the proposed development. These are the TAFE building and the residential apartment building at Alison Road, which are unusual in the context as described in the introduction chapter of this report (Chapter 1). Recent Government Approvals on the site have seen development of a similar scale to that sought by this proposal.

Given that this development is intended to be an integral part of the racecourse precinct rather than relating to the surrounding context the height of the hotel is considered to be responsive to the intended use and the site.

The proposed development and the Grandstand building will be the tallest forms in the area, highlighting the importance of the RRR site. It is therefore imperative that a high quality, iconic design is achieved.

Royal Randwick Racecourse Development Control Plan 2007 (RRR DCP 2007)

The aim of the DCP 2007 is to ensure that the Royal Randwick Racecourse is to be optimised 'as a thoroughbred racing, training and spectator facility of highest quality'. It is identified as 'an economic and tourism destination'. Any development is also to optimise 'the physical, recreational and environmental quality of the Racecourse, particularly the site's capacity and the spectator experience while respecting its heritage significance and landscape character and the Racecourse's role as an open space recreation facility'. The DCP also includes guidelines regarding the following subjects:

- **Uses -**
 - *'To promote diversification of uses that are not incompatible with a major racing and entertainment venue and are permissible within the open space zone and parklands context.'*
 - *'The intensity of uses is to be limited by the traffic capacity of surrounding streets (...).'*
 - *The site of the Spectator Precinct is assigned as an area dedicated for intense activity.*

The proposal's compliance:

The permissibility of the proposed uses is justified in the Planning Proposal and it is not a subject of this review. However it is noted that the hotel use and associated facilities will promote a diversification of uses and will reinforce the destination role of the racecourse.

- **Heritage conservation -**
 - The RRR is described as Metropolitan Sydney's oldest and longest continually operating racecourse. 'It is a unique cultural landscape with landmark qualities and a distinctive architectural composition that reflects a traditional approach to racecourse design and development, serviced by substantial transport infrastructure.'
 - The objectives of the guideline are to ensure that 'inter alia' the new development enhances and contributes to the heritage significance of the site and its setting, proactively managing the cultural landscape of the Racecourse. The heritage conservation of the site is mainly guided by the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared by Godden MacKay Logan that includes maps showing items to be conserved such as the Official's Stand, located next to the proposed development and the Fig trees located within the development site. It also includes a requirement to use guidelines, such as the NSW Heritage Office and Royal Australian Institute of Architects document titled Design in Context. This document shows examples of good and bad design in the context of heritage items and showcases the principles of good design.

The proposal's compliance:

The heritage response of the proposal is addressed by the heritage assessment. However in terms of urban design the proposal's setting, length and width will appear as an extension to the existing large and elongated forms along the north/west side of the racecourse track when seen in plan and from the racecourse itself. This includes the Official's Stand being approximately 90m long and the Grandstand, which is even greater in length.

The proposal includes an elevated structure (hotel) of 100m in length supported on 10m high columns over a shorter length podium building (55m long) centred below the elevated hotel component. The objective of this layout was to retain some visual connectivity to the racecourse from Centennial Park and the public domain, which is partially achieved in the current design through the views through the heritage gates and the access to the public terrace.

The columns, and vertical fins of the podium structure as well as the amended light colour applied to the columns provides a subtle reference to the vertical rhythm and colour of the heritage columns and balustrades of the Official's Stand designed in 1910. These are readily visible from the racetrack side façade and they have a specific detail/décor, spacing and (light) coloration.

While attempts have been made to preserve or replace any affected trees, the proposed design fails to preserve one of the three Fig trees located on the site. The Fig tree is part of a group of trees that are located in the Spectator Precinct, which also includes Port Jackson and Moreton Bay Figs, Plane trees and Brush Box.

These trees form part of the existing landscape character along Alison Road's street plantings. The Applicant proposes to remove the heritage Fig tree and replace it with three fig trees of a different species along the front facade of the building.

The maturity of the proposed trees to be planted has not been specified. It is always a better practice to retain any mature trees; however, in a circumstance where this is not possible, planting of new trees as mature as possible given the circumstance of the context is encouraged

Therefore a condition is recommended requiring replacement trees that maximise their maturity as well as a management plan to tend these trees and maximise their growth.

It is suggested that an arborist is consulted to advise on this condition



The existing brick façade of the Official's Stand seen from the street (the marquee on the subject site is visible behind the large Fig tree to the left)



The Official's Stand seating area-façade facing the course track showing the columns and the balustrade detail (left) and photo from 1952 (right)
(Source: Google)

• Landscape Design-

- Objectives of this clause are to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the site and to maintain and enhance the site's gateway role to Randwick City and the visual landscape connection from the site across Alison Road to Centennial Park. It also refers to maintaining and enhancing the treed landscape along Alison Road creating a green edge. The performance criteria for this clause is to retain the trees of exceptional or high heritage significance;
- The site tradition of 'gardenesque' style consisting of colourful plantings, water features and formal trees and shrubs is to be continued in the Spectator Precinct. The control also requires a detailed landscape design for every development, and
- The edge of Alison Road in the Spectator Precinct is to have a strong landscape character enhancing the sense of anticipation and an impressive entry to the racecourse.

The proposal's compliance:

As discussed in the above point referring to the heritage of the site, the current proposal fails to retain the heritage Fig tree, it provides three new fig trees along the street edge softening the appearance of the built form to the street. The landscape edge provided along the heritage gates (Turnstile Building/Wall) includes low planting that include flowering plants of various colours, which is in line with the intent of this clause.

- **Views -**

- The clause also includes major views to be retained and enhanced, including views to the city and other landmarks;
- The site is within the area outlined in the DCP that provides a strong visual presentation as a racecourse entry zone;
- It is to include an opening in the proposed massing to allow views from Daley Road and to enable visual permeability between Alison Road and the RRR, and
- New development is to optimise the views to the racecourse and Centennial Park.

The proposal's compliance:

The view analysis provided within the current application indicates that the scale of the proposal will provide a strong visual presentation for the racecourse when viewed from the north of Alison Road. The new refined massing provides a better landmark response to those views.

The current amended set of photomontages also includes a view from Darley Road indicated in the DCP as being historically significant. It shows that the view through the undercroft area to the racecourse will be partially retained, which is compliant with the DCP guideline.

The proposal is located within a view area from the southern and eastern side of the racecourse with views to the CBD and other landmarks indicated on Map 6 in the DCP. The view analysis provided within the proposal doesn't include a visualisation or photomontage from this side of the racecourse.

GMU has, considered the visual impact analysis included as part of the Grand Stand application, which is recently completed. View number 3 is taken from the south-eastern corner of the racecourse near the entry from Wansey Road. It shows CentrePoint tower above the existing marquee on the subject site, which is located on the right side of the picture. As the proposal's height is similar to the Grandstand, the view to the top of the CentrePoint Tower will be retained.



View analysis (courtesy of the Grand Stand) – the subject site is located to the right of the Official's Stand.

- **Built form and urban design-**

- The desired built form pattern of the RRR is to concentrate large scale spectator facilities set back from Alison Road and fronting the racetrack and to integrate new buildings consistent with the siting, form, scale, character, materials and colours of existing heritage components and their setting; new development height is to avoid adverse impacts on adjoining development and to be considered to the height of the Official's Stand and Alison Road incorporating where appropriate a stepping in heights;
- The roof form of new development is to be modulated and articulated to add interest to the building viewed from the public domain, reduce apparent bulk, relate to landscape or built heritage elements and achieve design excellence;
- Material, colours and detailing is to be selected to relate to heritage components and provide interest when viewed from public places;
- Additionally, the relevant control in Chapter 4 of the DCP mentions that new development is to increase their presence and image with improved entries, optimal landscaping and high quality buildings addressing the public domain;
- The DCP also seeks to improve the site's role as a major gateway to Randwick City by enhancing the public address along Alison Road, notable architecture and a prominent landscape edge and relationship to the parkland setting. It also seeks retention of trees of exceptional and high heritage significance.

The proposal's compliance:

The proposal is located within the Spectator Precinct, which has been designated as a location for large scale spectator facilities, with the subject site indicated as a zone for new members and corporate facilities' development. The proposed use, therefore, meets the precinct's designated zone as a large scale spectator facility.

The current proposal provides a landmark built form, marking the gateway to the Randwick Racecourse and Randwick area in general. The massing of the built form has been amended to provide a more interesting and dynamic form through the indents on the side elevations. This also assists to some degree in reducing the bulk of the 100m long front facade. Additionally the new trees provided along the facade soften the appearance of the bulk.

The light colours and verticality of the columns complement the verticality of the heritage Official's Stand. Additionally, the latest amendments to the proposal include the Turnstile Building/Wall as one of the proposal's entry point which is appropriate the turnstile's original role.

The space in front of the proposed subject site towards Alison Road is also indicated as an intended extension of an entry plaza with facilities addressing the street and providing new entry points. The new amended drawings indicate a provision of an additional public space close to the main entry point off Alison Road. The proposal also provides an entry to the public terrace located along the Alison Road edge via stairs and a ramp incorporated with an elevated platform and a landscaped edge. Therefore, the proposal is responsive to this DCP clause.

- **Urban design study-**

- The requirement of the Spectator Precinct Development Control Plan includes a request for preparation of an urban design study for the 'zone' by a suitably qualified urban designer, which would guide the future building for members and corporate facilities.

The proposal's compliance:

The required approach recommended by the DCP would have established an appropriate massing and envelope prior to development of a full DA. It is unfortunate that the applicant did not undertake this process initially as it would have provided a clear and agreed outcome regarding the development potential, setbacks and potential massing appropriate for the site.

However, the development application is accompanied by an urban design report prepared by the project architects as part of the description of the design process, which explains the intent of the proposed design. An independent urban design report, if prepared prior to the design of the site would take into account the DCP guidelines and all relevant controls to guide the resulting bulk, scale and form maximising the potential of the site while at the same time providing the best outcome for the site as a landmark, gateway and heritage site.

Although this part of the DCP has not been addressed in the development process of the subject site, a number of design options have been investigated and of the options considered the selected proposal represents the most positive outcome for the site. It has the potential to create a landmark building for the site if the main façade is further developed to create improved visual interest and reduce the apparent bulk.

3.3 Urban Design Review of the final proposal

The applicant has prepared a response to the issues identified by GMU. A review of these amendments indicates an improvement to the following issues:

- **Bulk and scale + articulation and facade treatment;**
- **Address and activation to Alison Road specifically with regards to:**
 - The use of the heritage Turnstile Wall/Building;
 - Uses along the podium fronting the street;
 - Entry area;
- **The treatment to the undercroft area.**

The design changes that have occurred in relation to the preliminary review and the key issues indicated by GMU are described and discussed below. The description also includes GMU's commentary of each of the issues and solutions provided.

Bulk and scale + articulation and facade treatment:

The Applicant's response:

- The final design includes indents at the turn of the facade, expressing the front and the side elevations in a different, more dynamic way.
- A change to the colour treatment has been applied to the sides providing a darker element located in the indent area and the colouring fading away toward the racecourse facade with a transparent edge at the southern end of the side elevations.
- The horse motif has been explained as being applied in three representational levels: collage from a distance showing an interpretation of a galloping horse shape; from a closer distance – the mosaic detail of the facade and from the inside as an individual pixel in the shape of a horse visible on the window glass.
- The glazing includes some sections on the hotel room windows which are clear allowing the enjoyment of the views from the hotel rooms, which when seen on the facade create a rhythm of rectangular shapes along the colourful facade with organic shapes of the horse motif.

GMU's comment:

The proposed design has not resulted in a significant change to the general facade colour and material treatment; however it has been further developed using the rhythm of the transparent sections of the hotel windows on the colourful facade to provide greater visual interest and reduce the dominance of the equestrian motif so that it becomes a more abstract background element.

The transparent rectangular shapes repeated on each level provide some visual relief to the facade length which combined with the variations in the intensity of the colour in the middle of the building and on the edges as well as on the side facades assists in reducing the monotony of the curtain wall.

The proposed sculptured forms and indentations on the building ends has significantly improved the bulk and visual appearance of the development when viewed along Alison Road. The amended scheme is more elegant and dynamic in its form, which is strengthened by the transition from a full coloured facade to a transparent glazing on the southern edges.

This treatment is regarded as the most successful amendment to the original design as it breaks the elongated form, reduces the visual dominance of the proposal and provides a contemporary presentation and distribution of finishes. The side elevations will be the most visible parts of the building and also viewed most frequently along Alison Road.

The long facade is not as well developed and as such it is imperative that as part of the design development of the proposal to Construction Certificate the treatment of the glass and motif be tested and improved to maximise the visual interest of the facade and mitigate the unbroken length.

The horse motif still requires further investigation as a prototypical element in the next stage of the project to ensure the appropriate outcome with regards to the issues of glare and to ensure the best choice of colours. This is to be prepared in consultation with a facade expert.

Address and activation to Alison Road

▪ The use of heritage Turnstile Wall:

The Applicant's response:

- The final design includes the same changes to the Turnstile Wall as described and shown during the review process. It includes a podium shape slightly chamfered enabling partial view from the heritage gates to the race track.
- The new design proposes that the heritage gate, which was originally closed and blocked by a 2m high elevated platform located only about 2m away, is now fully openable and allows for a direct access from the Alison Road footpath.
- The hotel massing has been moved by 2m to the west and 1m to the south providing more space between the heritage wall and the hotel.
- The proposed new access point through the heritage gate leads to a set of stairs to the right providing access to the elevated terrace platform located 2m above the street level. The elevated terrace accessible from the street provides an additional viewing point to the race track and access to the podium facilities.
- The 2m wall which will still be visible directly behind the gates is proposed to be treated with a softer landscaped edge including a Buxus microphylla planting.

- The landscape behind the Turnstile Wall includes a variety of low flowering plants which also provides softening to the edge of the wall and the fence.
- The refinements of the heritage wall have not changed from the original design and it includes the removal of the brick infill in the original wall openings and inserting a glass panel with an imprint of an interpretive graphic of race day visitor, with partial transparency.

GMU's comment:

The reasons for the suggested changes to the platform around the heritage gate/wall were to expose the gate and the heritage wall, provide the view connection with the race track and to bring back its original role as a gateway rather than to upgrade it and use only as a street fence feature. The original use of the gate was to provide entry and the additional connection from the street to the racecourse. This has been achieved with the amended design.

The alternative design opens up the vista through the gate toward the race track by shortening and chamfering the elevated platform, partially enabling the vista from the street through the gate to the race track. Due to the flooding issues and the original structure of the proposal, the elevated platform was not able to be lowered. Therefore, a set of stairs located to the right from the gate are proposed to provide access to the hotel's platform activated by the restaurant and bar and to provide additional views to the race track. This provides the additional activation of this part of the site.

The relocation of the massing away from the heritage gates has provided more space between the hotel massing and the wall and overcomes the issue of the hotel wing over-sailing the gate towers in the Turnstile Building/Wall.

This has provided some improvement in the response to the heritage gates and has also to some degree reduced the appearance of the bulk and scale of the proposal and has reduced the impact of its proximity to the street. The edge of the building is still close to the gateway but the relationship creates an improved relationship with the corner of the building directly above the gate's centre line.

The amended design now allows the gates to be used for public access which is also an improved outcome.

■ **The use along the podium fronting the street:**

The Applicant's response:

- The amended design includes an extended platform area along the entire northern facade with additional width enough to provide space for seating including tables and a set of stairs along the terrace.
- The design presented at the meeting in March already included the change to the shape of the lower ground platform and the activated terrace toward the street; however, it also included bifold doors along the facade in the middle of the podium volume with no use specified on the drawings. The same image has been used to explain the amendments to the ground floor area in the ATC Design Report (4/9 – Drawing A-0014). The final architectural ground floor plan drawing (A-1001) has changed and it shows a glazed wall (potentially operable) with the kitchen use inside and only one set of doors. This means that unless the kitchen design allows viewing some parts of the cooking and preparation process, the glazed wall will most likely be obscured to hide the kitchen use. Therefore the activation provided to this part of the building is only through the outdoor dining area on the terrace which will be serviced by the restaurant staff through the one set of doors along the glazed wall.
- The new design includes a publicly accessible terrace along the entire length of the podium toward the street edge and providing direct access to the viewing terrace on the eastern side. This terrace was previously indicated as a closed area accessible only through the Turnstile Wall and the hotel restaurant.
- The platform terrace is publicly open allowing viewing of the racecourse from its eastern end (which possibly requires appropriate monitoring on a race day) and also providing access to Bar 2 and the restaurant.

GMU's comment:

The amendments have provided an improved interface to the street and some activation of the façade to Alison Road.

The inclusion of a bar and offices have provided active uses that in combination with direct public access from Alison Road will improve the interaction between the street and the podium as well as the building.

The proposal has not adequately addressed the issue of activation for the centre of the podium building. Location of a kitchen use is not appropriate unless it is an open kitchen that creates activity and a sense of theatre to the outside spaces.

Therefore it is recommended that either a condition be applied requiring any future tenancy to provide an open kitchen to both sides of the tenancy where they address Alison Road and the race course or that the proposal be amended to provide an active retail use in this space.

It is also not clear how the terrace is going to be managed during race days as it appears to be open to the public in the current proposal. This is highly recommended for everyday use; however it requires a management plan to ensure safety during race days.

▪ **Entry area and its activation to Alison Road:**

The Applicant's response:

- The new design eliminated a raised planter bed and the access ramp, which were located parallel to the site boundary along the street close to the entry area. In the current proposal the ramp is recessed from the street edge allowing for additional pedestrian space and two new feature trees (Hill's Weeping Figs).

GMU's comment:

The change in the design allows for a more direct connection between the public domain and the hotel's entry. It provides more opportunities for passive surveillance in both directions, to the street from the hotel foyer and from the street toward the entry. It is also acknowledged that the reduced space of the raised planter bed in-between the car park ramps and the pedestrian entry allows for additional landscape which will enhance the original 'gardenesque'/park like character of the site.

Given the flooding issues it appears to not be possible to lower the car park and achieve a more direct relationship between this side of the podium and Alison Road. Therefore the proposal is considered to adequately address this issue.

The treatment to the undercroft area:

The Applicant's response:

- Changes have been made to the new stair's configuration and the materials used in the area.
- The underside of the hotel (Bedroom wing soffit) in the final design includes a mirror cladding finish layer attached to the concrete soffit. This creates a slight variation of levels between the concrete soffit as a background and the mirror cladding providing the impression of a large suspended mirror.
- The stair cases have been redesigned and reshaped to a more sculptural element. The stairs weave between the columns providing an impression of binding them together with the crooked lower parts of the columns. The sculptural effect is also highlighted by the material finish applied to the stairs, which is steel cladding with high gloss paint finish. The columns are off white concrete.
- The proposed design includes a reflective soffit element and high gloss finish to the stair elements. This is additionally lightened by the off white colour of the columns. This, as described in the design report, provides an alternative termination of the vista called 'the shaped glossy object' rather than 'a field of columns' discussed during the review process.

GMU's comment:

The applicant through its design development in response to the issues has provided some amendment to the design of the columns and stairway to try and achieve more visual interest.

In GMU's opinion, the proposed amendments improve the ambience of the space between the terrace platform and the soffit through improved materials and greater activation through the improved access to and into the building.

The top heavy impression of the hotel wing above the irregularly shaped podium and the columns is still visible when viewed from the east as shown on Perspective 3. The use of mirrors and changes to the column materials and stair design will assist in creating changes in the reflections and shadow patterns on the terrace and the façade of the building that will provide greater visual complexity.

This will assist in reducing the visual dominance of the hotel wing and should improve the amenity and visual interest of the lower space. The reflections will potentially create the impression of a field of columns to achieve a more sculptural outcome than previously suggested.

The off white colour applied to the columns provides a lighter impression which is more welcoming and appealing when viewed from the street level. Therefore the proposed changes have improved the visual appearance and interest of the undercroft spaces.

The columns shown on the perspective in the original design are shown as dark grey, nearly black elements, however the finish indicated on the materials and finishes board is the same as in the current design, despite that the current design shows the columns as off white concrete elements. It is unclear if the change of the material needs to be indicated in the final materials and finishes board or if the perspective of the original design was incorrect.

Conclusion –

Whilst the proposal has not been amended to the extent suggested by GMU the changes proposed have assisted in improving the urban outcome of the scheme. Its interface to Alison Road is improved and the treatment of the heritage gates has been substantially improved.

The modelling of the proposal as seen along Alison Road has also been significantly improved to provide a more sculptural and less dominant form which will create an iconic and interesting form for the Race course.

The podium treatment has been improved and subject to the suggested uses for the podium area can achieve activation and a reasonable interface with Alison Road.

The treatment of the area under the hotel has also been improved and the reflectivity of the soffit treatment should providing a shifting shadow and light pattern that compliments the abstract design of the main hotel.

The treatment of the racing motif has still not been proven to reduce the apparent bulk of the very long hotel frontage. However the improved treatments of the ground plane and landscape have assisted in mitigating to some degree the visual dominance of this façade.

To ensure that the treatment does create 'movement' in this façade to compensate for the lack of articulation further design development is needed prior to issue of the CC to ensure it is a high quality design outcome.

On this basis the proposal can be supported.

4. Final conclusions and recommendation

GMU has conducted a review of the Amended and Final Royal Randwick Racecourse Hotel Development Applications including submissions and the preliminary advice from DoP&I regarding the original proposal.

GMU acknowledges that the proposal will be of great economic benefit and will help to increase the overall level of activity and tourist use of the area. The final design will contribute to the revitalisation of the precinct and the site and will reinforce the role of the economic corridor for Sydney.

The proposal will achieve a positive response relative to the main vision statement for the racecourse specified in the site specific DCP i.e. that, *'the Racecourse can play a role in achieving Council's identified outcomes - Places for People* including:

- *'Excellence in urban design and development;*
- *Excellence in recreation and lifestyle opportunities;*
- *A liveable city;*
- *Heritage that is protected and celebrated.'*

The final proposal is considered to have achieved an improved outcome relative to the original proposal and will deliver a reasonable solution for the site and the immediate area. Further design development is required for the main façade treatment to ensure that the abstract of the motif in combination with the fenestration of the hotel will assist in mitigating the length of the façade relative to Alison Road.

The design of the ends of the buildings is greatly improved and the treatment of the podium and undercroft and their activation and visual appeal to Alison Road has also been improved. The response to the heritage gates and their role has been further developed and now achieves a reasonable response.

Therefore on balance the proposal is considered to be a reasonable outcome for the site and precinct and is supported.

APPENDIX E RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF CONSENT
