



SSD7881 (DA2a)

Supplementary Response to issues raised by City of Sydney (CoS) submission

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1 Background

On 21 December 2016, senior representatives from the Sydney Opera House Trust (SOHT) met with representatives from the City of Sydney (CoS) to discuss and provide clarification in response to the CoS submission titled *SSD 7665 – Joan Sutherland Theatre Front of House and Accessibility and Additional Works, Sydney Opera House & State Significant Development 16_7881 – Sydney Opera House Building Renewal Program - Function Centre and Related Works*.

The attendees were:

- Chris Corradi (Area Planning Manager, Planning Assessments- City of Sydney)
- Margaret Desgrand (Senior Heritage Architect- City of Sydney)
- Michaela Briggs (Planning Officer- City of Sydney)
- Kya Blondin (Head of Government, Policy and Renewal Stakeholders - SOH)
- Chris Barling (Project Manager - SOH)
- Tom Sloane (Project Director- Building Renewal SOH)
- Alan Croker (Design 5 Heritage Architects)

The meeting provided an opportunity to brief CoS on the rationale for the proposal and provide a response to the concerns raised in letters received from SSD 7665 and 7881. It also provided an opportunity for consultation prior to lodging the response to submissions.

This report outlines the key issues discussed in relation to **SSD7881 only** and provides additional information to support the application as part of the Response to Submissions (RTS) prepared by KEYLAN Consulting on behalf of the SOHT for this application.

A subsequent meeting was held on the 19th January 2017 with the City of Sydney, the Sydney Opera House and Peter Poulet, Government Architect and Chair of the Eminent Architects Panel.

The attendees were:

- Peter Poulet (NSW Government Architect and Chair of the Eminent Architects Panel)
- Chris Corradi (Area Planning Manager, Planning Assessments- City of Sydney)
- Margaret Desgrand (Senior Heritage Architect- City of Sydney)
- Michaela Briggs (Planning Officer- City of Sydney)
- Kya Blondin (Head of Government, Policy and Renewal Stakeholders - SOH)
- Chris Barling (Project Manager - SOH)

The outcomes of these meeting are reflected in the sections below.

2 Introduction

The current proposal is the result of detailed consultation with a wide variety of experts and testing of design options. The final proposal is based on an evidence based approach which has carefully balanced the heritage conservation of the building with its ongoing function as a living public building to be celebrated by existing and future generations.

The proposed building works will inevitably result in a range of impacts on the fabric of the Sydney Opera House. However, the benefits arising from these works will be far reaching in terms of the long term viability of the building to continue to play its pre-eminent role in Sydney and Australia's cultural life.

These drivers are at the core of the *Outstanding Universal Values* that underpin its World Heritage Listing, and the numerous values that underpin its National Heritage Values. In Jørn Utzon's own words:

...So I suggest that modifications can be made as the questions and needs arise - whenever somebody wants to remodel something, refurbish areas you could look back at the ideas that were being developed,



some of these might be viable today or at the time when the change is called for and some of them have been outdated by the time that has gone by as the evolution results in high technological advances... (Utzon Design Principles p32)

Considering the potential impacts of the current proposal and the other projects that form part of the building Renewal Program, none of these values will, in the full analysis, be adversely affected and all will benefit and be strengthened, ensuring their survival for present and future generations.

Detailed responses to the key issues raised by OEH are detailed in Section 3.

3 Response to Key Issues

3.1 Function Centre

3.1.1 Summary of key issues raised by CoS

- It is in direct contradiction with Jørn Utzon’s vision for the Opera House;
- It will result in the removal of significant fabric; and
- It will diminish any future potential to re-establish the former restaurant.

Following the meeting on the 19th January 2017 the City re-iterated that proposed irreversible internal changes and the demolition of a portion of the curved corridor to form the Function Centre should be carefully reconsidered and limited to that which is absolutely necessary.

3.1.2 Comment

- There is no reference in the Utzon Design Principals that directly contradicts the use of the space as a function centre instead of a restaurant.
- The removal of the significant fabric was noted in the Heritage Impact Statement. However, the Opera House considers that the proposed openings outlined in Figure 1 below are justified, and absolutely necessary.

The structural opening proposed by the Sydney Opera House is 5775mm (w) x 3650mm (h). This differs to the information provided in the original EIS as refinement of the structural analysis has meant that more of the wall can be retained. The size of these openings has also been workshopped with architects, TZG, and the Eminent Architects Panel, as detailed by TZG in their attached letter. The size of the proposed openings are considered to be the right balance between preserving heritage structure and introducing functionality & connectivity between the spaces.

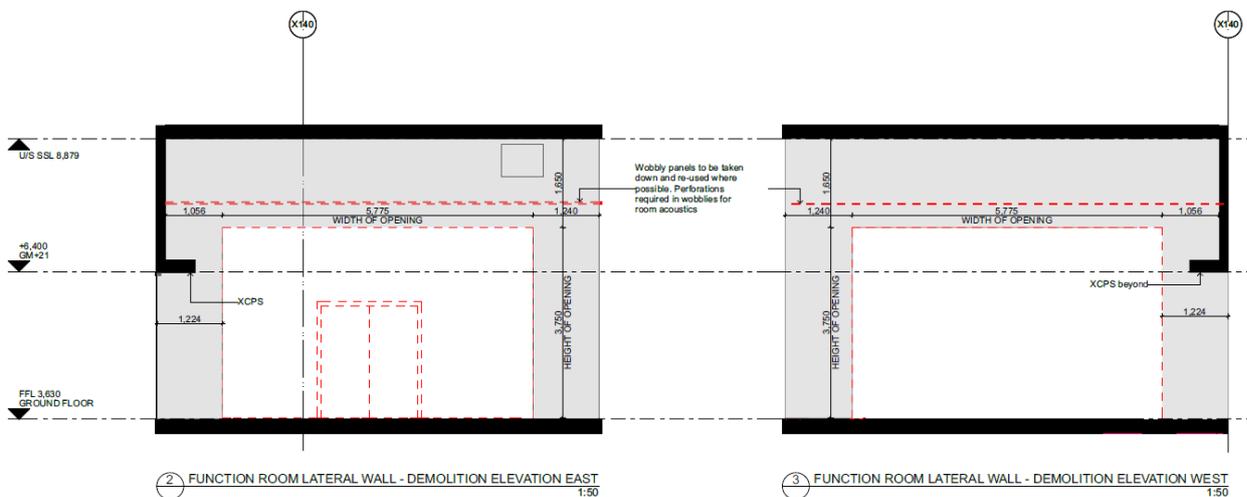


Figure 1- Function Centre Lateral Wall Opening Sizes



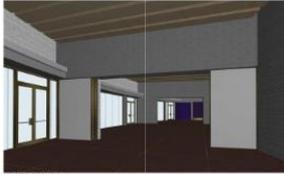
The following figure illustrates options considered during the design process for the structural openings.

TYPE 1 - LOW OPENING

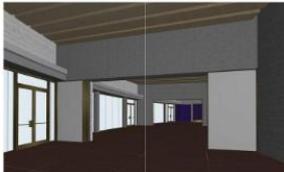
2700mm HIGH - ALIGNS WITH U/S OF RING BEAM

DON'T NEED TO CUT RING BEAM

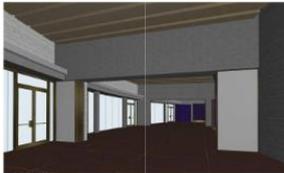
BRONZE FRAMED WHITE GLASS SIDE PANELS



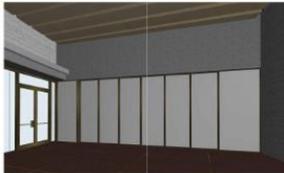
OPTION 1A:
OPENING: 4.8m(w) x 2.7m(h)
UNEQUAL SIDE PANELS
4 EQUAL DOORS



OPTION 1B:
OPENING: 5m(w) x 2.7m(h)
EQUAL SIDE PANELS
4 EQUAL DOORS



OPTION 2:
OPENING: 5.7m(w) x 2.7m(h)
EQUAL SIDE PANELS
6 EQUAL DOORS (WIDER CAVITY)

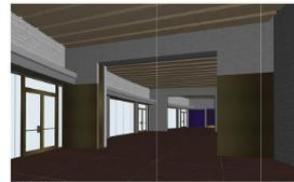


TYPE 2 - HIGH OPENING

3600mm HIGH - MAX. HEIGHT OF DOORS

NEED TO CUT RING BEAM

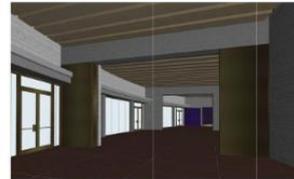
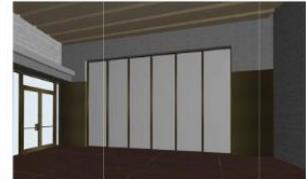
BRASS CLADDING TO SIDE PANELS



OPTION 3:
OPENING: 4.8m(w) x 3.6m(h)
EQUAL SIDE PANELS
4 EQUAL DOORS



OPTION 4:
OPENING: 5.7m(w) x 3.6m(h)
UNEQUAL SIDE PANELS
6 EQUAL DOORS (WIDER CAVITY)



OPTION 5:
OPENING: 5m(w) x 3.6m(h)
EQUAL SIDE PANELS
6 EQUAL DOORS (WIDER CAVITY)

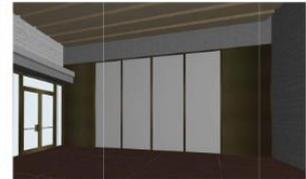


Figure 2- Function Centre Opening Studies



Figure 3- Render of proposed function centre openings



- The Opera House does not consider that the Function Centre proposal, and proposed physical changes, would diminish the future ability to re-establish the former restaurant. On the contrary, the inclusion of the additional purpose-built kitchen and the interconnected spaces provide a more solid and functional foundation for a restaurant.

The City of Sydney clarified that this concern was raised due to the public accessibility of this space should the area be leased on a commercial basis as a function centre. The Opera House recognises that the northern broadwalk is a significant public realm. Returning the space to public use is a driving force behind the removal of the marquee. It could also enable temporary furniture as part of a food and beverage offering, should the need arise in the future.

Encouraging public access to and use of the northern broadwalk is a key focus of the Opera House's Precinct Masterplanning process, which is under way and includes programming and activation strategies to support the Renewal infrastructure developments. Opera House management considers that the function centre proposal improves the amenity of the northern broadwalk and will enable strategies to increase the number of people exploring the Opera House site to the north. It is also envisaged that the function centre will be used in association with the Opera House's performing venues, or as a talks and ideas or small performance venue from time to time, ensuring that the public will benefit from the new space. It is not envisaged that the function centre will only be used for corporate or private uses.

The Opera House will continue to explore ways in which the area occupied by the function centre can be enjoyed and accessed by the general public. The City of Sydney's example of incorporating a simple café service and outdoor seating will be considered.

In view of the City of Sydney's concerns, the Opera House commits to:

- Maintaining access around the Northern Broadwalk to the Eastern Broadwalk, regardless of the operations of the function centre; and
- Developing a plan of management for the function centre with the future operator that addresses the balance between public and private uses, including initiatives to welcome the public regularly into the function centre for dining experiences, 'bite size' performances and community events. The Opera House proposes that the development of this plan be included as a condition of consent, to be developed within six (6) months of consent being provided.

3.2 Relocation of Ballet Rehearsal Room

3.2.1 Summary of key issues raised by CoS

- Jørn Utzon's concept was to group rehearsal and preparation spaces beneath their related auditorium, which resulted in four rehearsal rooms being located beneath the minor hall (now JST), and a much larger rehearsal hall beneath the major hall (now Concert Hall). This proposal removes the last remaining rehearsal room from beneath the JST, relocating it to a distant location on the other side of the central passage.
- The proposed new location for the ballet rehearsal room is approximately two minutes' walk from the auditorium. It is also remote from the performers' dressing room and other facilities and requires performers to cross the central passage to access it. This arrangement is incompatible with the Opera House's status as a world class state of the art performing centre. While the application states this arrangement is temporary, there is no plan in place for a more suitable permanent location. Accordingly the Consent Authority must consider this arrangement as potentially permanent.
- The SOHI identifies that the works to create the new ballet rehearsal room will impact fabric of 'little' significance. This is incorrect, as it will affect fabric and spaces graded as (C). In addition, the proposed openings for a door and window on the east side will affect the central passage, which is ranked as (B). Accordingly the heritage impacts of this component of the proposal have been understated.



3.2.2 Comment

- The concept of Jørn Utzon was not fully realised in practice as the main rehearsal room for the Joan Sutherland Theatre is located under the Concert Hall and not the JST. This main rehearsal room is referenced in the Conservation Management Plan 3rd Edition however the secondary rehearsal room affected by the proposal is not. The main rehearsal room (room 54) is located off the green room from level 1 (+30), whereas the secondary rehearsal room (room 69) is located on level GR (+012).

The main rehearsal room is un-affected by the proposed works and the location of the proposed future rehearsal room is on the same level (GR, +012) as the existing secondary rehearsal room.

The proposed future rehearsal room is also accessible via lifts and stairs from the Green Room and other levels, and does not necessarily involve crossing central passage.

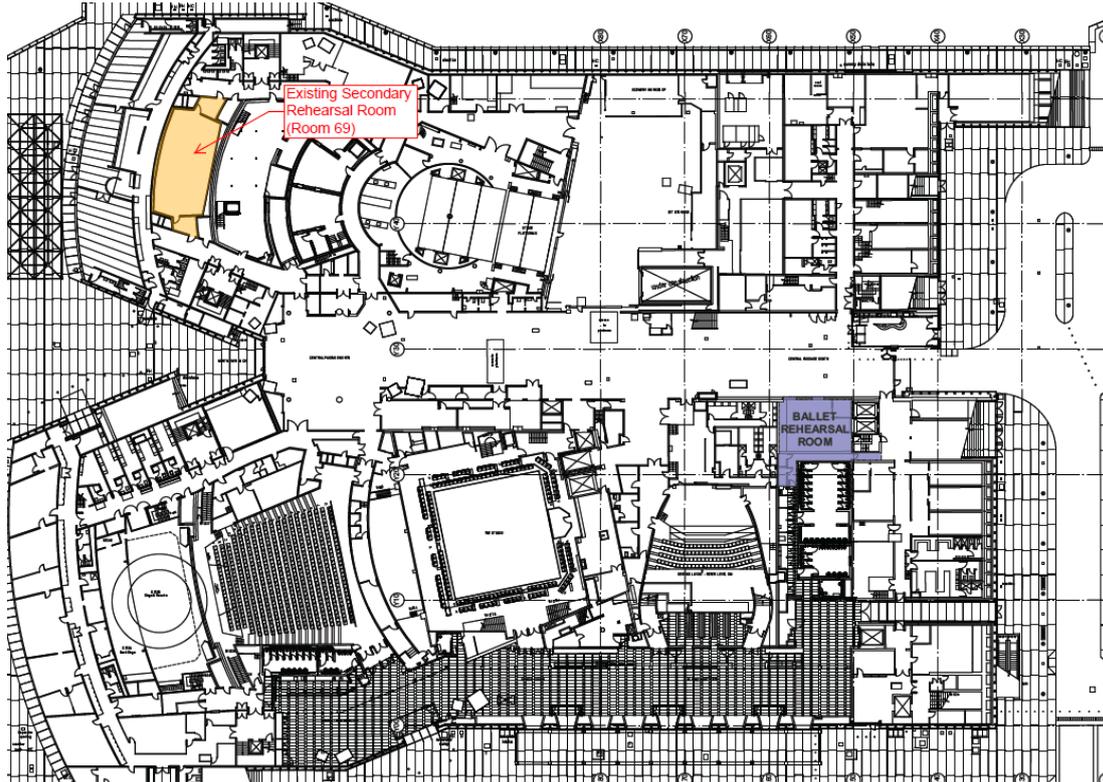


Figure 4- Existing Secondary Rehearsal Room (GR +012)

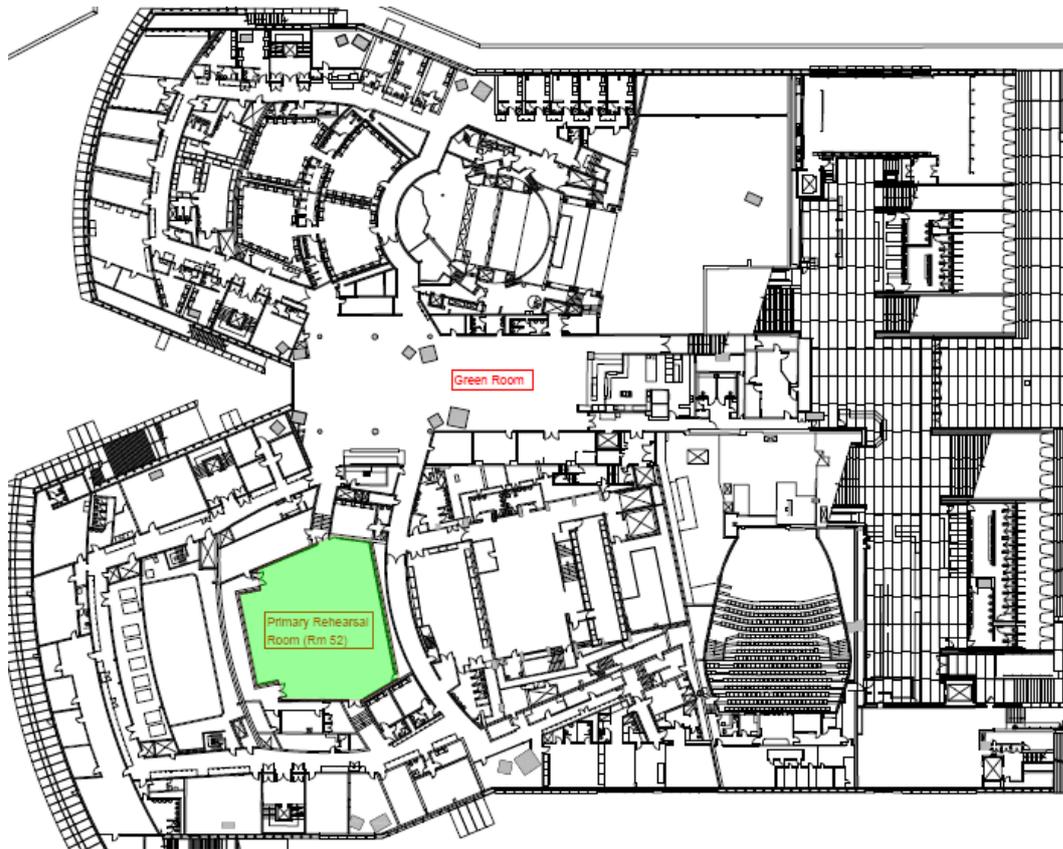


Figure 5- Existing Primary Rehearsal Room (L1 +030), accessed off the Green Room

- Both resident companies, the Australian Ballet and Opera Australia have been consulted on this proposal and have provided the following comments in support of the proposal:

“Thank you for your letter of 20th October 2016 seeking The Australian Ballet’s endorsement of the JST Acoustic Upgrade Project and the new ballet rehearsal room. In general TAB endorses the works and is excited by ongoing improvements to Sydney Opera House facilities.” Libby Christie, The Australian Ballet Executive Director

“Please be advised that Opera Australia endorse and support the renewal project as per the specifications documents supplied.” Joe Martorana, Opera Australia Chief Operating Officer

The proposed location of the Ballet Rehearsal Room will be temporary until a more appropriate location can be found, or future major upgrades to the Joan Sutherland Theatre are undertaken.

- The second paragraph on page 43 of the HIS is referring to the space to which the Ballet Rehearsal Room is to be relocated. This space would be ranked as C-D in the CMP, however it has in recent times been divided into 2 levels and new walls inserted. Its fabric is therefore of ‘little’ (D) significance.

The City raised no further concerns with the proposal in the meeting on the 19th January 2017.

3.3 Removal of the Marquee & Use of the outdoor area

3.3.1 Summary of key issues raised by CoS

- The CMP grades the marquee as being intrusive as it obscures the northern exterior of the podium. Its removal is consistent with the CMP Policy 11.1 and is therefore supported.
- The proposed outdoor area must be managed to ensure the retention of free public movement around the ‘broad walk’.
- The above images demonstrate how the original design intent has been diminished over the years. This application presents an opportunity to re-establish the north-eastern corner of the ‘broad walk’ for general



public access and for free public use as an outdoor seating area. The City would be highly supportive of such a proposal.

3.3.2 Comment

- Noted.
- Noted. The removal of the marquee would facilitate free public movement around the north of the building and is specifically addressed by the proposal to have removable bollards and umbrellas through this zone. Free public movement will be maintained as part of the proposal, as committed to in 3.1.2 above.
- As detailed in section 3.1.2 the Opera House agrees with the sentiment and will consider the ability to include these aspects in the Function Centre design. The concepts of improved public access and free public use of spaces is the major driver for the Precinct Masterplan which is currently being developed for the site.

In view of the City of Sydney's concerns, the Opera House commits to:

- Maintaining access around the Northern Broadwalk to the Eastern Broadwalk, regardless of the operations of the function centre; and
- Developing a plan of management for the function centre with the future operator that addresses the balance between public and private uses, including initiatives to welcome the public regularly into the function centre for dining experiences, 'bite size' performances and community events. The Opera House proposes that the development of this plan be included as a condition of consent, to be developed within six (6) months of consent being provided.

4 Conclusion

The SOHT appreciates the feedback provided by CoS to its application, and has provided additional information and justification for those aspects of the proposal that are of concern to CoS

The SOHT believes that the consultation undertaken, along with the evidence submitted above provide meaningful justification for the proposed works and seek that the application be reconsidered by the CoS and its objection withdrawn.