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Cameron Sargent
Team Leader, Key Sites Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
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Dear Cameron,

SSD 8671 - Walsh Bay Arts and Cultural Precinct

I refer to your invitation to comment on SSD 8671 for works to Wharf 4/5, Wharf 4/5 Shore Sheds and Pier 2/3 at Walsh Bay Arts and Cultural Precinct at 13 Hickson Road, Dawes Point. It is understood that the application seeks approval for internal and external alterations across the site for cultural uses and events including three new commercial spaces, wayfinding and signage and early construction works.

The City has now had the opportunity to review the proposal, in consultation with the Central Sydney Planning Committee, as per the requirements of Clause 16(a) of the *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 16 – Walsh Bay*. The proposal is broadly supported and the deletion of the waterfront square is considered to be a welcomed modification to the earlier scheme for a similar development on the site submitted under SSD 7689.

The following comments on the current application are provided for your consideration:

Heritage

Concern is raised regarding the height of the proposed external lifts and their visual prominence from key vistas when viewed from Sydney Harbour, particularly at the northern end of Pier 2/3. Consideration should be given to a reduction in height of the lift over-runs and locating these lift shafts further south along each elevation. It is also recommended that lift shafts and balconies are aligned symmetrically on the eastern and western elevations of the wharf buildings.

Given the heritage significance of the site and extent of works proposed, it is recommended that a single comprehensive Conservation Management Plan be prepared for the entire Arts Precinct, including Pier 2/3, Wharf 4/5 and Shore Sheds 4/5. The Conservation Management Plan should be prepared in accordance with the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter) by a suitably qualified heritage practitioner prior to the commencement of works.

A detailed Heritage Interpretation Plan should also be prepared by a suitably qualified heritage practitioner, which is consistent with the goals and direction of the Walsh Bay Precinct Interpretation Plan 1999 and include moveable heritage and address any evidence arising from archaeological monitoring works. The Department is encouraged to require the heritage interpretation plan to be implemented prior to completion of the project.

The Department is strongly encouraged to ensure that an appropriately qualified heritage consultant, experienced in the conservation of similar structures, is commissioned to work with the consultant team throughout the design development, contract documentation and construction stages of the project. The heritage consultant should be involved in the resolution of all matters where existing significant fabric and spaces are to be subject to preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptive reuse, recording and demolition.

The heritage consultant should be provided with full access to the site and authorised by the applicant to respond directly where information or clarification is required regarding the resolution of heritage issues throughout the project. Should the application be approved, evidence of the above commission on the above terms should be provided to the consent authority prior to commencement of work on site. It is recommended that the nominated heritage consultant signs-off the completed project prior to occupation/completion.

It is noted that awnings are not characteristic of the Hickson Road elevation of the Walsh Bay Shore Sheds. If the Department is minded to approve new awnings, they should be simply detailed, confined to entries and be sympathetic to the industrial character of the facades. The awnings should be designed with input from the applicant's heritage consultant.

Public Art

Should the Department be minded to approve the application, it is recommended that a Public Art Strategy is prepared for submission in consultation with the City of Sydney and the Public Art Advisory Panel.

Signage

The Department should satisfy itself in relation to the following:

- Details of the new proposed signs shown in Figure 27 (red lines marked as "signage location") are unclear. There are a substantial number of these signs and there is a potential for clutter depending on the purpose, size, design and location of these signs.
- No details of the 'new digital walls' included in Figure 27 are provided. Details such as the size of these elements as well as their fixings to the wharf building fabric are required. Fixings should avoid significant heritage fabric and be reversible.
- The proposed digital awning signs as shown in Figures 12 and 13 indicate they have a minimal projection however, Figures 19 and 20 show them as substantial projecting awnings, though dimensions are not annotated. The awnings should be sized to allow a margin around them, enabling a reading of the rendered surface on which they are affixed. They should be set in from each side by approximately 200mm for the same reason.

- Figures 19 and 20 illustrate signage across the viaduct bridges akin to “The Goods Line” signage. This is supported for the ‘Pier 2/3’ and ‘Wharf 4/5’ signs as these are *place based* signs, as is The Goods Line sign. There is some concern that the other proposed bridge signs are for dance/theatre companies that may come and go to the precinct. The signage strategy should speak to the removal / replacement of these signs. The signage is designed for the present number of companies, with particular name lengths. Removal of parts of the sign over time due to the loss of a company should be addressed.

Any proposal for signage should be subject to a comprehensive signage strategy prepared with the input of the nominated heritage consultant and subject to a separate development application to the City of Sydney Council.

Transport

Approval by the City’s Pedestrian Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee is required for any changes for street parking restrictions.

Due to site constraints and difficulty in accommodating Medium Rigid Vehicles (MRV), all loading and unloading should be undertaken outside of scheduled event times and peak attendance periods, with service vehicles no larger than a MRV.

35 bicycle spaces are to be provided on site with an additional 40 bicycle spaces to be provided within the Wharf 4/5 Shore Sheds. It is noted however that the drawings do not appear to show the additional 40 bicycle spaces in the Shore Sheds. Staff bicycle parking should be provided according to the security level B as specified in Australian Standard AS 2890.3:2015.

Public Domain

The existing asphaltic concrete surface of the footway fronting the development site is in poor condition and is likely to require resurfacing to support the significant increase in pedestrian traffic as a result of the subject redevelopment. Concurrently, the existing alignment levels can be improved as part of the foot way upgrade. Accordingly, it is recommended that the City’s standard ‘Alignment Level’, ‘Public Domain Plan’, ‘Protection of Stone Curb’ and ‘Public Domain Damage Deposit’ conditions (attached) are imposed if the application is approved.

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Maria O’Donnell, Specialist Planner, on 9265 9834 or at modonnel@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely,



Graham Jahn AM
Director
 City Planning | Development | Transport