

DPIE reference: SSD 9383

Mr Daniel West  
Principal  
Ethos Urban  
173 Sussex Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Attention: Candice Pon

Dear Mr West

### **SSD 9383: Site 2A/2B DRP – Public Domain Response**

I refer to the revised public domain and landscape response relating to Sites 2A and 2B which was received by Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) on 6 August 2019 and subsequently presented by the architectural and landscape team on 7 August 2019 to SOPA officers and the independent Chair for the Design Review Panel (DRP).

SOPA and the DRP Chair have carefully considered the revised plans and provide advice as follows.

#### **Design Excellence**

In order for Design Excellence to be recommended for the entire project, the proposed public domain concept needs improvement, specifically, to better relate to the design and architecture of the proposed 'competition winning' buildings. The current iteration of the public domain, in particular the oversized brick features create such a domination on the site that it would seem all other elements within the space have become subordinate to this brick block concept.

Further, the overwhelming geometry, angularity and density of the hard landscaping juxtaposes with the natural design and form of the winning architectural proposal; specifically, the intricate facade on the circular tower at Site 2A and the cross laminated wooden frame to building 2B.

#### **Public Domain Concept**

It is understood that the public domain concept attempts to draw inspiration from the nearby Brickpit and its heritage significance to the broader precinct. In this instance however, this scaled up brick block concept has not been successfully resolved and appears to only provide a tenuous link to the sites broader heritage, and in fact compromises the design resolution of this public domain space.

The scale and composition of the oversized brick blocks appear to inhibit the range and scale of spaces available for interesting and varied public domain elements and quantity of

soft landscaping and planting. As such, there is concern surrounding the impacts on the types of uses and the future comfort level that could be experienced in this space.

It is considered that the inclusion of varied materials to create interesting and comfortable spaces may benefit the overall design by creating different areas of appeal and intimacy. This public domain space needs to provide comfort and interest for future workers, hotel guests and residents traversing the site.

The inclusion of the 'lifeline' within the scheme is supported, however, how it relates to the overall public domain strategy needs further resolution. The public domain concept needs to demonstrate how this idea can be woven into the overall design not appear as a tokenistic gesture. If it is to be pursued, the design team may consider working with an artist to develop the detail design during the approval process.

## **Landscaping**

As previously noted, the scale and density of the brick blocks seems to have limited the scale of soft landscaping. Given SOPA's sustainability and green cover objectives, further consideration of the how increased planting and canopy cover can be used to create comfort and mitigate increasing heat island effects should be given significant prioritisation.

The public domain outcomes could be improved by taking into consideration the sites microclimate, particularly the morning shade followed by exposure to afternoon sun and at certain times of the year exposure to westerly winds.

In general, it is considered that a significantly greener, softer response would likely result in a more comfortable and useable space, compliment the proposed buildings, create an appealing interface with the proposed hotel and establish improved outdoor comfort levels.

## **Fig Tree Treatment**

The revised approach to the retention of the fig tree is considered an improvement to the netting idea. However, the angularity of the stepped terrace, and significant use of brick blocks down to the tree appears to jar with the naturally curving nature of the fig tree.

The integrity of the fig tree is of paramount importance and any interventions which may jeopardise the tree will be given careful consideration prior to any commitment to the final design. SOPA understands that further work is being undertaken with an arborist to fully investigate the extent of the roots and how any built form will interact with the tree. As such, SOPA accepts that a concept design may require some adjustment during the approval process as the tree investigations progress.

The principle of the observation deck creating activation along Australia Avenue is supported, however the existing concrete wall is positioned to protect the tree and the level change from road accidents. As such, consultation with RMS is recommended prior to any commitment to the design.

Furthermore, the observation deck shows what appears to be a canter-levered area, which may have the potential to create dark and uninviting spaces beneath it and around the base of the fig tree. Further consideration with regard to how this space will be treated to ensure its safe, welcoming and inviting is required.

### **Surfaces and Paving**

The current design indicates no difference between the internal public domain paving and the pedestrian paved areas along the streets. Consideration should be given to creating a hierarchy for pedestrian flows and better defining, through materials and scale, the edges to the internal spaces.

Specifically, it is noted that the widths of pedestrian routes within the site are set at 2.4m which is the standard width for pavements within Sydney Olympic Park. These widths however are not required for internal pedestrian routes within the landscaping spaces. The inclusion of less formal routes could be pursued and potentially assist in creating a hierarchy through the space.

### **Conclusion**

The current public domain concept lacks correlation with the design of the proposed buildings which are of a natural design and composition. The dominating brick block form inhibits the composition of soft landscaping and density of planting and canopy cover which is considered important to create a desirable, inviting and comfortable space. While the approach to the fig tree is considered an improvement, further development and the inclusion of varied landscape elements and materials are likely to result in an overall improvement across the space.

Should you require any clarification on the above matters, please contact myself on (02) 9714 7145.

Yours sincerely



**Alix Carpenter**

Senior Manager, Planning

**13.08.2019**