

Godden Mackay Logan

Heritage Consultants



Amatil Building, 71 Macquarie Street

Review of Potential Impacts on the Sydney Opera House Buffer Zone

Report prepared for AMP/Mirvac
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Report Register

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71 Macquarie Street, Sydney—Response to Submission of Heritage Council of NSW on Sydney Opera House Buffer Zone

Executive Summary

Godden Mackay Logan Heritage Consultants (GML) have prepared the following report in response to a submission from the Heritage Council of NSW regarding the potential impact of the proposed redevelopment of the Amatil Building, 71 Macquarie Street, Sydney, on the setting of the Sydney Opera House World Heritage site. The *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005* requires that an assessment of potential impacts be undertaken from the public domain throughout the listed Sydney Opera House buffer zone.

The Amatil building is located near the Sydney Opera House (SOH), within its World Heritage buffer zone. As such, the proposed development comes under the provisions of the Sydney Harbour SREP, which provides for the protection of the World Heritage values of the SOH and its setting. The SREP specifies 'the need for development to preserve views and vistas between the SOH and other public places' within the buffer zone, for development to preserve the world heritage value of the opera house and for development to 'avoid any diminution in the visual prominence of the SOH when viewed from other places' within the buffer zone.

It is clear that the SREP provisions aim to ensure that any new development within the buffer zone would not create any additional impacts on the visual setting of the SOH when compared with the current situation. It is also apparent, that the latter is the relevant benchmark when analysing the potential impact rather than the height controls contained in the LEP. This Review of Potential Impacts has been prepared to assess whether the proposed development envelope would have an impact on the heritage values of the SOH and its setting when compared with the existing development on the site.

The proposed development would not obstruct views or vistas to the SOH, nor would it diminish the visual prominence of the building when viewed from the west, northwest and east. The new western component of the proposed development (which would be the same height, and have the same setback along Circular Quay, as the Quay Grand building immediately to the north) would be barely discernible in views from much of the buffer zone and the higher component would not exceed the height of the existing Amatil building.

Visual analysis undertaken for this report has revealed that while the Amatil building is visible from many points throughout the buffer zone, it does not appear as a strong, distinct element of the Circular Quay area. Rather, it acts as a transitional building between the East Circular Quay development and taller buildings to the south.

This Review of Potential Impacts has found that the proposed development would retain all public views and vistas to and from the SOH consistent with the requirements for development within the buffer zone, as set out in Section 58B of the SREP. It would not reduce the visual prominence, or have any adverse impacts on the significance or setting of the SOH. The proposal would not result in an appreciable change to the built form and environment that frames the SOH. In summary, the proposal would protect the World Heritage values and visual setting of the item.

Contents	Page
1.0 Review of Potential Impacts on the Sydney Opera House Buffer Zone.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Sydney Opera House Heritage Status and Statutory Context.....	1
1.2.1 Sydney Opera House Heritage Status.....	1
1.2.2 Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005.....	1
1.3 Methodology.....	2
1.4 Discussion of Views Analysis.....	2
1.5 Consideration of Potential Impacts.....	3
1.6 Conclusion.....	3
2.0 Views Plan and Photographs.....	4

1.0 Review of Potential Impacts on the Sydney Opera House Buffer Zone

1.1 Introduction

Godden Mackay Logan (GML) has been commissioned by AMP/Mirvac to prepare an analysis of the impact of the proposed redevelopment of the Amatil Building, 71 Macquarie Street, Sydney, on the setting of the Sydney Opera House World Heritage site. The *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005* requires that an assessment of potential impacts be undertaken from the public domain throughout the listed Sydney Opera House buffer zone.

1.2 Sydney Opera House Heritage Status and Statutory Context

1.2.1 Sydney Opera House Heritage Status

The Sydney Opera House is listed on the World Heritage List, the National Heritage List, the NSW State Heritage Register and by the City of Sydney Council, as well as a number of non-statutory heritage registers.

The importance of the setting of the Sydney Opera House to its significance is described in the State Heritage Register citation as follows:

...the building has exceptional aesthetic significance because of its quality as a monumental sculpture in the round, both day and night, and because of the appropriateness of its design to its picturesque setting. Its public spaces and promenades have a majestic quality, endowed by powerful structural forms and enhanced by vistas to the harbour and the city.

1.2.2 Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005

Development in the buffer zone of the Sydney Opera House World Heritage site is controlled by the *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005* (Sydney Harbour SREP). The extent of the buffer zone is shown as Figure 1.1

Section 58B (Protection of world heritage value of Sydney Opera House) provides the following matters for consideration when proposing development within the buffer zone.

The matters to be taken into consideration in relation to development within the Sydney Opera House buffer zone include the following:

- (a) the objectives set out in clause 53 (2),*
- (b) the need for development to preserve views and vistas between the Sydney Opera House and other public places within that zone,*
- (c) the need for development to preserve the world heritage value of the Sydney Opera House,*
- (d) the need for development to avoid any diminution of the visual prominence of the Sydney Opera House when viewed from other public places within that zone.*

The objectives in clause 53 (2) relate to the establishment of the buffer zone, including the objective of the Sydney Harbour SREP 'to recognise that views and vistas between the Sydney Opera House and other public places within that zone contribute to its world heritage value.'

1.3 Methodology

In preparing this report, GML reviewed the provisions of the Sydney Harbour SREP and undertook site inspections from public places in the Sydney Opera House buffer zone, including Kirribilli, Woolloomooloo, the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Rocks and along the Sydney Harbour Bridge. View montages prepared by HASSELL of the proposed development from the Rocks, Circular Quay and the Royal Botanic Gardens were also reviewed.

It is clear that the SREP provisions aim to ensure that any new development within the buffer zone would not create any additional impacts on the visual setting of the SOH when compared with the current situation. It is also apparent, that the latter is the relevant benchmark when analysing the potential impact rather than the height controls contained in the LEP. This Review of Potential Impacts has been prepared to assess whether the proposed development envelope would have an impact on the heritage values of the SOH and its setting when compared with the existing development on the site.

1.4 Discussion of Views Analysis

The redevelopment of the Amatil Building is proposed to be a stepped form, with a higher component on the east being the same height and width as the existing building on the site. The western component is proposed to be the same height as the Quay Grand building immediately to the north. The façade of this western portion is proposed to be aligned with façade of the Quay Grand building.

The existing Amatil Building is visible from many points throughout the Sydney Opera House buffer zone, particularly in views from the west and northwest. From many locations within the buffer the existing Amatil Building is not visible, even where the Sydney Opera House is visible, such as from northern end of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Woolloomooloo, as shown in Views 7 and 8. (Figures 2.8 and 2.9) The top floors of the existing building are visible in views from the Royal Botanic Gardens to the east (Figures 2.7 and 2.8), but vegetation blocks views of the building further east from Woolloomooloo (Figure 2.9). The existing building is taller than the other, later, buildings along East Circular Quay, but is framed by taller development to the south along Macquarie and Phillip streets.

The Amatil Building does not appear as a strong, distinct element of the Circular Quay area in views from the north and northwest (Figures 2.2, 2.4–2.6). Rather, it tends to blend in to the mass of development in this area. In views from the west, the building can be more easily read as a distinct element; however, it does not appear out of place, rather it acts as a transitional building between the East Circular Quay development and taller buildings to the south (Figure 2.3). The Amatil building blends into its surrounds and built form context when viewed from the east, particularly from the Sydney Opera House itself. The proposed form of the new building would make the lower portion of the building appear bulkier in views from the northwest, however this would be barely discernible in views from much of the buffer zone. The lower portion would not be visible at all in views from the northeast, as views of it would be blocked by the existing Quay Grand building (Figure 2.7). There would be no change to any views or vistas to, from or of the Sydney Opera House and its buffer zone as a result of the proposed envelope.

1.5 Consideration of Potential Impacts

The form and height of the proposed development would not have an impact on the setting of the Sydney Opera House and its heritage values. The proposed development would not obstruct views of or from the Sydney Opera House nor diminish its visual prominence in any way. The proposal would not result in an appreciable change to the built form and environment that frames the Sydney Opera House and avoids the diminution of the prominence of the Sydney Opera House by causing a neutral impact to the existing setting.

The development would partially obstruct views of the Royal Automobile Club of Australia (located on the southern side of the Cahill Expressway) from the northeast; however, this would not constitute an impact on the setting of the Sydney Opera House. The Amatil Building is not a significant element of this setting and currently forms a component of the backdrop of the Sydney Opera House in views from the north and northwest. The proposed development, which would be the same height as the existing building and the same alignment as adjacent buildings to the north, would not detract from the Sydney Opera House setting.

1.6 Conclusion

The proposed development would retain all public views and vistas to and from the Sydney Opera House, consistent with the requirements for development within the buffer zone, as set out in Section 58B of the SREP. It would not reduce the visual prominence, or have any adverse impacts on the significance or setting of the Sydney Opera House. It would protect the World Heritage values of the item.

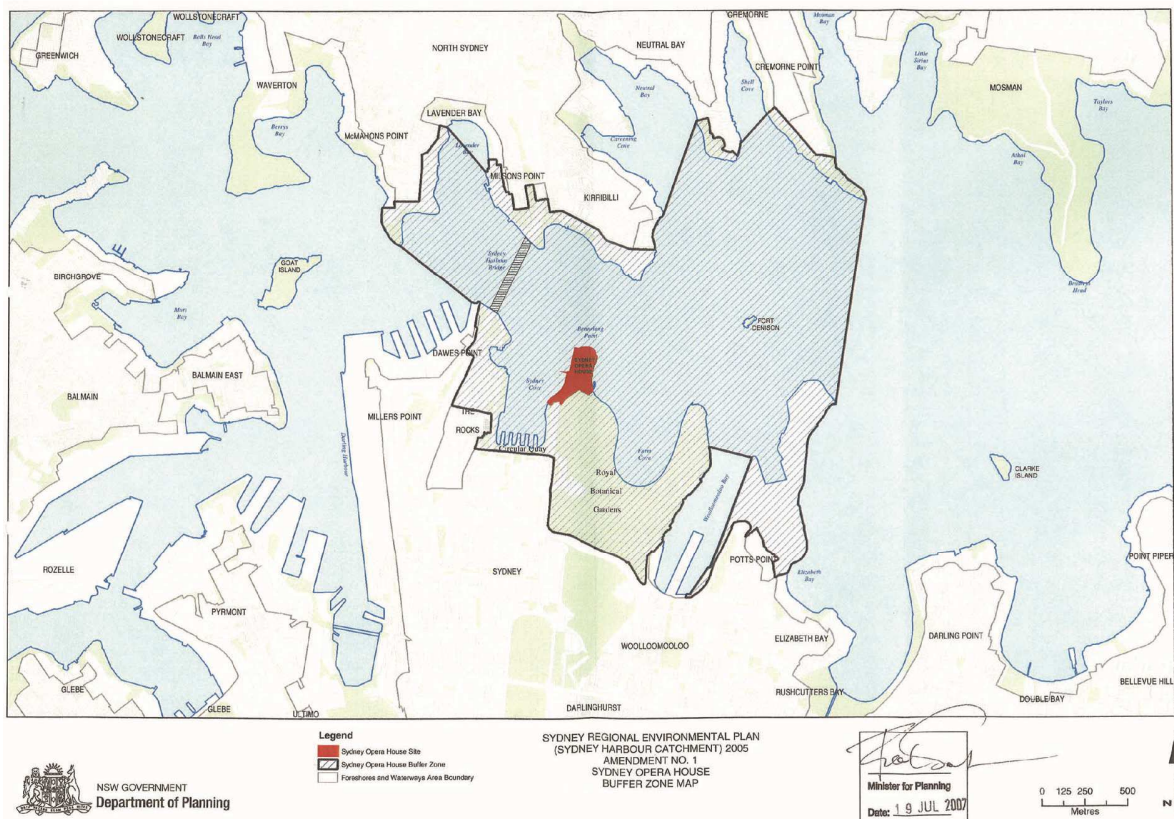


Figure 1.1 The Sydney Opera House buffer zone. (Source: NSW Department of Planning)

2.0 Views Plan and Photographs

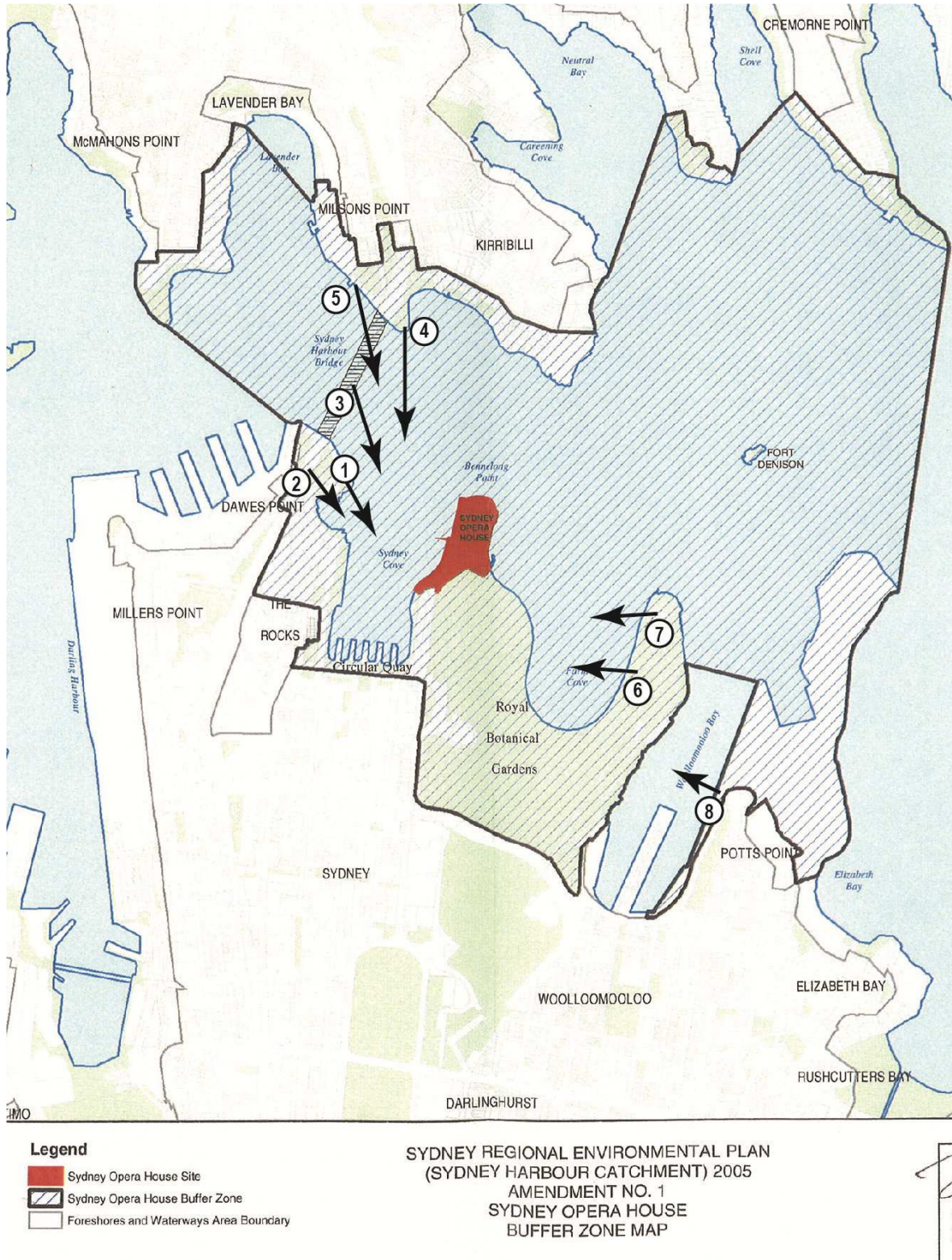


Figure 2.1 Plan showing views taken from public places within the Sydney Opera House buffer zone.



Figure 2.2 View 1 from Dawes Point Reserve back towards East Circular Quay and 71 Macquarie Street. The Amatil Building is indicated with an arrow. The proposed development would be the same height as the existing building, but would have a lower portion extending toward the quay, in alignment with the Quay Grand building on its left.



Figure 2.3 View 2 from the bridge stairs at Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Amatil Building is indicated with an arrow. The lower, western portion of the proposed building would appear bulkier along East Circular Quay, but would align with the buildings to the left.



Figure 2.4 View 3 from the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Amatil Building is indicated with an arrow.



Figure 2.5 View 4 from Bradfield Park, Kirribilli. The Amatil Building is indicated with an arrow.



Figure 2.6 View 5 from the Milsons Point ferry wharf. The Amatil Building is indicated with an arrow.



Figure 2.7 View 6 from the eastern area of the Royal Botanic Gardens. The proposed development would be visible from this point, but would not appear any larger than the existing building on the site (location indicated with an arrow).



Figure 2.8 View 7 from the northern end of the Royal Botanic Gardens, near Mrs Macquaries Chair. The proposed development would be visible from this point, but would not appear any larger than the existing building on the site (location indicated with an arrow).



Figure 2.9 View 8 from Woolloomooloo looking back towards the subject site. The Amatil Building is not visible from this point, but its approximate location is indicated with an arrow.