

GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT NEW SOUTH WALES

11 May 2021

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PROJECT: Royal Far West (Modification to Part 3A Concept Approval MP10_0159)
RE: SDRP – 29 April 2021

Dear Nicholas,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above project. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations from the first design review session held on Thursday, 29 April 2021.

The modified concept plan for Royal Far West (RFW), including the RFW Drummond House accommodation, RFW offices, commercial space and residential, are generally supported, specifically:

- removal of the vehicle entry from Wentworth Street for the previously proposed hotel
- visual connection from the new RFW building through the Drummond House accommodation and commercial development to the ocean beyond
- removing some of the retail from Wentworth Street and South Steyne to provide views to the ocean for the public and the users of the RFW facilities and accommodation
- breaking the mass of the previous concept plan perimeter block fronting Wentworth Street, allowing access to a public forecourt and opening up RFW as a charity to the community
- careful planning of the architectural elements, including residential and RFW Drummond House accommodation.

To support resolution of the modified concept plan and design development generally, the following issues require further consideration:

Masterplan

- The modified concept plan removes most of the shopfront retail and introduces an expansive undercroft along South Steyne. While the modification provides visual and physical connections to the broader public domain, the lack of active uses at ground level means a lack of surveillance, particularly at night, which could cause safety and security issues. The relatively low height of the undercroft limits the amount of daylight, and the proposed coastal planting may not grow. Further consideration and testing should be undertaken to ensure this public space and landscape remain open, safe and secure and add value to the character and activity to South Steyne. For example, introducing some retail and raising part of the undercroft to double height would balance views and access to South Steyne and increase the amount of light to the planting below.

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- It is understood the adaption of the Drummond House heritage item would lead to unsatisfactory compromises for the RFW accommodation. This determination should be demonstrated via expert advice you have received. While partial demolition of the heritage item is supported in principle, the rationale for demolition should be justified in response to the heritage policy and the Urbis Heritage Conversation Management Plan.
- The podium setback and the 6m lower level setback from Wentworth Street, as per the previous concept plan, have been removed in the modified concept plan. The proposed eight-storey building with no setback alters the scale of the development from the street and results in the following challenges that should be addressed as part of design development:
 - the previous massing and setback referenced the height of Drummond House. The current proposal dominates Drummond House and further design development is required, which could include exploration of new setbacks to ensure the existing heritage item is respected.
 - the massing of the current proposal could impact the views of neighbouring residential properties. Further investigation is required to illustrate any impacts to views as a result of the modified concept plan.
- Daylight studies should be undertaken to demonstrate a good level of amenity to the RFW accommodation dining room.
- Shadow studies should be undertaken to illustrate:
 - impacts to the neighbouring buildings compared to the existing condition and previous concept plan
 - impacts of the eight-storey building fronting Wentworth Street, which is no longer set back as per the previous concept plan
 - the overshadowing of Manly beach compared to the existing condition and previous concept plan.
- A wayfinding strategy should be developed to ensure visitors can easily find the RFW facilities and accommodation within the newly developed site.
- A wind study should be undertaken to investigate the impact of wind on the usability of the elongated courtyard and undercroft.

Architecture and landscape

- Existing deep soil should be identified and retained as part of the modified concept plan. In addition, for a successful landscape outcome, adequate soil volume, light and water need to be provided for the existing street trees and the newly landscaped area. The removal of the 6m setback from Wentworth Street may be detrimental to these trees, and further design development is required to ensure they are not damaged.
- Consideration should be given to where and how the car park will be exhausted. Further design development is required to ensure the fumes from the car park exhaust along South Steyne do not impact the public space.
- Consideration should be given to the security and connection of the RFW multipurpose area to the public space, which if left exposed, could put vulnerable children at risk. Further design development is required to allow visual connection to the ocean and to balance this with the protection of children.
- Consideration should be given to the adaptability of the modified concept plan to accommodate future changes to RFW. The brief for the RFW campus is very

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prescriptive, but if adaptability can be incorporated in the planning, more sympathetic changes can occur without degrading the well-designed buildings.

Response to Country

- The project does not currently demonstrate a deep connection to Country, which is relevant to the charity of the RFW and the site context. A long-term strategy should be developed to ensure ongoing links to Country beyond opening day. Design development should be informed by:
 - RFW and the design team re-engaging with Aboriginal RFW staff, RFW clients and local Aboriginal community members. This engagement should be maintained consistently throughout the project lifecycle
 - Aboriginal art is supported, such as the current patterned Aboriginal fence, but Aboriginal art and patterns alone are not considered a sufficiently comprehensive or integrated response to Country and place. Connection to Country should be spatially thought of, such as the proposed sensory garden within the redeveloped Drummond House courtyard
 - it is recommended the design team refer to the draft framework [Connecting with Country](#) on the GANSW website.

It is recommended this project returns to the SDRP where the following material should be presented:

1. Response to the recommendations provided in this advice letter.
2. Evidence of engagement and initiatives that support connecting with Country.
3. Details of the landscape design, including soil depths, plant types and protection of the existing street trees, are to be presented by the landscape architect.
4. Provision of the basement plan and sections showing the impact the building has on the current street trees.
5. Information on the security line of the public courtyard.

We trust this information is helpful and look forward to seeing the project as it develops. Please contact GANSW Design Advisor, Laura Graham (laura.graham@dpi.nsw.gov.au), if you have any queries regarding this advice.

Sincerely,



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Principal Design Review
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