

Client

Frasers Property

Project

Frasers Broadway concept plan - review of
social aspects

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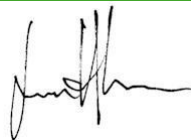
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Contact

Carolyn Stone
9290 2075
carolynstone@ozemail.com.au



Sydney
t +61 2 9387 2600
PO Box 1488
Level 6, 332-342 Oxford St
Bondi Junction NSW 1355
f +61 2 9387 2557
consulting@elton.com.au
www.elton.com.au
ABN 56 003 853 101

Prepared by	Carolyn Stone
Reviewed by	
	Jason Prior
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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Contents of this Report

The purpose of this report is to describe any changes in the likely social impacts and implications of the proposed development of the Frasers Broadway site, relative to the previously proposed (and approved) Concept Plan for the site. This report reviews

- the arrangements made for the provision of community benefits related to development of the site
- the agreement regarding a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing
- social aspects of the new Concept Plan
- the way in which social aspects will be considered in the approval of more detailed design proposals for the site in the future.

Some social issues are dealt with in other parts of the environmental assessment, e.g. in the urban design and traffic and transport analyses. This report focuses on social questions not considered elsewhere and summarises those that have been dealt with in more detail in other reports.

1.2 Structure of this Report

An overview of social issues raised following the approval of the previous Concept Plan is provided in Section 2. Section 3 summarises the agreements regarding the provision of community benefits and a contribution towards affordable housing. Section 4 reviews the new urban design in terms of its social implications. Section 5 reviews the process for consideration of social aspects of more detailed development applications for the site.

2 Social issues raised following the approval of the previous concept plan

Following the approval of the previous Concept Plan, various issues have been raised relating to the social aspects of the plan. It was stated that:

- the zoning structure of the site was not clear, i.e. that the site was overly “salt and peppered” and that the various land uses on the site (residential, retail, commercial) were not sufficiently concentrated in specific areas. As a result it was likely to be difficult to create focal points of activity and to manage the interaction between residential and non-residential uses. From a retail perspective it was considered that greater concentration of activity would contribute to the overall viability of retail uses.
- the environmental amenity of the site could be improved if vehicles were removed from the site to a greater extent and movement through the site were more oriented to pedestrians.
- the sustainability objectives were not sufficiently ambitious.
- the scale of Kensington Street should be preserved and be more consistent with its heritage character.
- the intensity of built form at the interface of the site with Chippendale should be reduced.
- the setting of the Brewery Yard precinct should be improved.
- more thought should be given to ways in which heritage buildings and precincts might be integrated into the development.
- given that Chippendale has a very low rate of open space, compared with other areas, the amount of open space should be maximised.

3 Agreements reached regarding community benefits and affordable housing

In terms of the provisions of Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, a statement of commitments has been made that addresses the provision of community benefits, and a voluntary planning agreement entered into between the land owner and the Redfern Waterloo Authority for the provision for a contribution towards affordable housing.

3.1 Statement of Commitments

There are no changes in the statement of commitments for the proposed development as regards:

- \$2.5 million as a community facility payment, to be used either to upgrade an existing City of Sydney community facility or to contribute to providing a new community facility.
- provision of a Child Care Centre/s at a rate consistent with the Child Care DCP adopted by City.
- the Public Art plan currently being developed with reference to the City of Sydney Public Art Policy and Public Art Developer Guidelines.
- construction of a public park on that part of Balfour Street that is proposed to be closed between O'Connor Street and Wellington Street.
- signalised pedestrian crossings on City Road and on Regent Street to improve pedestrian access to Victoria Park and Prince Alfred Park respectively (the design of the crossing on Regent Street is already underway).
- construction of new internal roads to be dedicated as public roads (fewer than in the original Concept Plan).
- works to external roads and footpaths.
- various infrastructure and other site works.

There is a positive change as regards the provision of a public park. Under the previous Concept Plan a park of approximately 5380 square metres in area was to be provided. The park has been increased in size and links into a new urban square in the location of the building that was on Block 5 west, which has now been removed.

3.2 Voluntary Planning Agreement

The Affordable Housing Voluntary Planning Agreement will be reviewed as part of the process of amending the Concept Plan.

4 Social aspects of the concept plan

4.1 Introduction

This section reviews those aspects of the Concept Plan that are likely to affect the way in which people use the site and the quality of their experience of the site, compared with the previously approved Concept Plan.

4.2 Overview of changes to the concept plan

The previously approved Concept Plan was based on an extension of the grid pattern of the City onto the site. The proposed Concept Plan retains the grid pattern, but converts part of the grid into pedestrian only thoroughfares, removing vehicles from the site and allowing for the provision of more public open space. Development bulk is redistributed on the site to achieve a greater quantum of open space and to decrease the development intensity of the interface with Chippendale.

The quality of the public domain remains the driving force of the proposed development, with the public domain more oriented to pedestrians than previously. Overall there is an increase of over 10,000 square metres of publicly accessible open space on the site. ('Publicly accessible open space' comprises all public open space as well as publicly accessible private open space, including the privately owned plaza, lanes, frontages, streetscapes and park.)

A new Urban Square has been created to the east of the Brewery Yard with the floor space previously in this location included in other buildings. This new Urban Square represents a significant addition to the public benefits provided by the site's development. It comprises a series of "green plates" – landscaped platforms – which relate to the adjacent landmark building on Broadway and which contribute both to the landscape character of the site overall and the definition of the Urban Square.

In addition the pocket park in Wellington Street has been substantially enlarged and new street parks created around the intersection of Kensington St, Kent St and O'Connor St to create a strong sense of entry to the south east quarter of the site.

The proposed form of Kensington Lane (formerly Kensington Street) has been modified to maintain its

current scale and keep it in scale with heritage buildings on the lane. This has been facilitated by the purchase of two remaining properties on Kensington Street that were not included in the previous Concept Plan. As a lesser scale environment, it will have a retail/entertainment character and may comprise small-scale strata offices, consistent with the demand from the educational institutions in the vicinity for start-up business spaces.

Further, more detailed attention has been given to the quality of the environment at ground level. The urban design of the site and the architecture of particular buildings have been reconsidered to enhance the way in which the site is perceived at ground level. A "ground zone" 15 metres high has been delineated across the site and treated specifically as a pedestrian environment to maximise pedestrian comfort and amenity. As a result there is greater pedestrian permeability across the site than previously.

The proposed Concept Plan still accommodates a mix of residential, commercial and retail uses, as well as recreational activity in the main area of parkland, the Urban Square and other open spaces. The main change as regards the mix of uses involves the increased concentration of retail and commercial uses, to improve the identity and viability of these zones and to create focal points of activity on the site. The ratio of residential to commercial/retail space, measured in terms of floor space has shifted from 59%:41% to 51%:49%.

The previous Concept Plan provided for 142,262 square metres of residential floor space, the maximum permissible under the amended Concept Plan is 131,100 square metres. Given the average occupancy rate for City of Sydney apartments of 1.67 persons per dwelling (City of Sydney data), this would result in a site residential population of around 2,100 people, less than the previously proposed 2,800 people. (It is noted that this estimate does not allow for the possible difference between the average size of apartments on which the average occupancy rate is based and the likely average size of the apartments on the site.)

4.3 Metropolitan context

The metropolitan social benefits of the proposal remain the same as previously in the sense that the proposal would allow for better use of existing urban services and facilities, particularly major transport infrastructure and associated transport services. In line with Sydney's Metropolitan Strategy, it is considered appropriate to seek the highest possible density on this site that is consistent with positive environmental, economic and social outcomes.

4.4 Local (city) context

The potential social benefits of the site's location relative to the commercial, retail and recreational opportunities of the City remain as before.

The preparation of the new Concept Plan has involved more extensive involvement by the University of Technology (UTS). The potential relationship with the UTS is likely to be specifically enhanced, compared with the previous proposal, as a result of a mutual interest in sharing sustainability infrastructure.

It is also more likely than previously that corporate affiliates of UTS will seek to take advantage of space potentially available on the site. Further, UTS plans to redevelop its site on Broadway between Wattle and Jones Street are likely to now be consistent in scale and character with the proposed development of the site opposite the UTS campus.

4.5 Relationship to surroundings

Whereas the previous Concept Plan relied on extending the street pattern of Chippendale into the site, to current proposal emphasises pedestrian connectivity between the surroundings and the site.

Under the proposed Concept Plan vehicle access through the bulk of the site will be available via Irving, Carlton and Balfour Streets. In the central part of the site this street will be treated in such a way that drivers are made aware of the likely presence of pedestrians. A differentiation in the pavement materials and the narrowness of the street itself, together with the use of other design elements such as bollards, will provide an "environmental signal" to traffic to slow down. There will be no specific crossing points provided for pedestrians, as all of the street in this central part of the site should be able to be easily crossed, due to the above-mentioned design measures.

Vehicle access will also be available along Chippen Street and Kensington Lane. The role of O'Connor Street differs from the previous Concept Plan in that it becomes a normal, two-way urban street intersecting with Abercrombie Street. Provision is made for pedestrian access across O'Connor Street by way of a raised platform opposite the Balfour Street park. The platform may extend the full width of the park, connecting the Balfour Street park with the main park opposite.

The Regent Street and Kent Road (signalised) intersection will remain as before, providing a principal point of entry to the site

The pedestrian network continues to be concentrated along the grid previously included in

the Concept Plan, but part of the grid has now been dedicated to pedestrians (and cyclists), enhancing pedestrian priority.

The previous Concept Plan proposed taller buildings toward the City and lower buildings towards Chippendale, mediating between the City and inner residential areas. The current proposal continues to do this, but to an even greater extent. Building bulk under the current proposal has been shifted away from Chippendale and towards Broadway, on the City's edge. This will contribute to retail activity on Broadway, providing improved interest and therefore amenity for pedestrians along this major route.

The main park continues to be well connected with the oldest part of Chippendale to the south and easily accessible to other parts of Chippendale. A new signalised crossing on Abercrombie Street will improve access across Abercrombie Street in general and facilitate access to activities on the site and the park in particular. Access is available from the site to both Prince Alfred Park to the east (via the previously approved, improved pedestrian crossing near Mortuary Station) and Victoria Park to the west (both with swimming pools).

The inter-connectivity of green spaces on the site is improved, creating more of a network of open space than in the previous Concept Plan.

The structure of development on the site will continue to facilitate easy access to services and facilities, especially for pedestrians. The likely mix of uses in the now more concentrated areas of retail activity will minimise the need for travel for people living and working on the site. Already, the rate of car ownership in Chippendale is low compared with the rest of Sydney (30% of dwellings in Chippendale had no motor vehicles, compared with a Sydney average 12.6% at the time of the 2006 Census); this pattern is likely to be continued onto the site. Similarly, there is likely to be a much higher than average percentage of people on the site who are able to walk to work, as is currently the case in Chippendale (24% of Chippendale residents walked to work compared to the Sydney average of 5%, according to the 2006 Census).

4.6 Legibility

Under the previous proposal, the legibility of the site derived primarily from the grid pattern allowing unimpeded views from the public domain. Under the current proposal, legibility is still achieved by the underlying grid pattern, which although not a vehicle based grid, is still evident to the user in the form of pedestrian routes, as well as in the remaining streets with vehicles.

The new Urban Square provides added legibility to the site as it will be a focal point for public domain activity. Further, the concentration of uses in particular parts of the site will contribute the site's legibility as it becomes understood that certain activities are to be found in certain parts of the site.

4.7 Identity

Under the current proposal, the future identity of the site will derive from the qualities and characteristics of the public domain and the quality of architecture of individual buildings, as well as from the activities on the site. In the previous Concept Plan, the grid street pattern gave the site an identity similar to other parts of inner Sydney. Under this proposal the site will have a more specific identity, related to architectural form and quality, but also to the highly pedestrianised nature of the public environment. The new Urban Square, in particular, will provide a unique identity for the site. Overall, the site will have more of a landscaped character than previously, as landscaping is incorporated into the buildings themselves and onto rooftops.

The historic identity of the site will also be highlighted by the proposed development structure. The visibility of the Brewery Yard precinct will be enhanced.

The identity of the site will also be shaped by the tallest building proposed, on Broadway opposite the UTS tower. Together the two towers will provide a sense of there being a gateway to the city from the west.

4.8 Accessibility

Ease and convenience of access to a range of publicly and privately provided services and facilities continues to be facilitated by the site's relationship with its surroundings. Further considerations include:

- the absence of any "dead ends" in the development, providing a high level of permeability for pedestrians in particular.
- the proposed treatment of Kensington Lane as a shared way, which may be closed off to vehicle traffic at particular times, providing good pedestrian accessibility.
- the ease with which cyclists can ride within and across the site, accommodating the identified City of Sydney regional cycle route between Balfour Street and Jones Street.
- the potential ease of access to public space on the site for students and others at UTS.

A new right turn from Broadway into Balfour Street will provide added convenience for drivers.

Accessibility for people with disabilities remains as before. Although the site has more changes in gradient than is commonly perceived, accepted standards for accessibility will generally be achieved, providing a higher level of accessibility for people with (mobility, sight etc.) disabilities than is achieved in the City generally.

4.9 Views and vistas

The proposed Concept Plan opens up views of historic buildings to an even greater extent. Views of the Brewery Yard precinct in particular become more significant as the Brewery Yard is located in more of a (soft and hard) landscape setting.

The view to Mortuary Station along Old Kent Road, opened up by the previous Concept Plan, remains.

The view from the City of the tower on Broadway marks a bend in the road that redirects Broadway from a north-south orientation to an east-west orientation. From the west, as already noted, the view of the Broadway tower and the UTS mark an entry point into the City proper.

There is an improved view of the site from Prince Alfred Park.

4.10 Safety and security

Crime and safety issues relating to the modified Concept Plan are explored in a separate Preliminary Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Report.

When compared with the NSW average, the City of Sydney LGA has far higher crime rates in almost all categories relating to assault, robbery, break and enter and fraud. Crime statistics for Chippendale indicate a significant decline in stealing over the last 3 years and a reduction in the incidence of break and enter, robbery, assault and stolen vehicles/vessels within the Chippendale area. This is in contrast to a reverse trend within the broader City of Sydney LGA.

While these trends are reflected in a growing sense that Chippendale is now a safer place to live, local residents continue to identify crime as their third most important concern (see City of Sydney Household Survey, 2006). In addressing these crime risks and safety concerns, the social as well as the physical characteristics of an environment must be considered as contributors to the creation of safer, vibrant and welcoming communities. The Preliminary CPTED Report considers the ways in

which the modified Concept Plan has taken account of social and physical elements to create such an environment.

The modified Concept Plan is by nature schematic and therefore some of the matters relating to safety and security will need to be resolved in future development applications for the project. The modified Concept Plan, like the approved Concept Plan, provides for:

- increased pedestrian permeability
- open spaces that are surrounded by retail, commercial and residential uses and which are therefore subject to surveillance
- a street layout and pedestrian thoroughfares that minimise the opportunity for “entrapment”;
- emergency vehicle access that complies with relevant guidelines

Key advantages of the modified Concept Plan compared with the approved Concept Plan will be:

- increased activation and increased pedestrian permeability of the site through the creation of active edges along the extensive Broadway and Abercrombie Street frontages, where presently there is minimal opportunity for casual surveillance
- the removal of several 6m wide shared ways that were included in the approved Concept Plan and which raised safety concerns for both the NSW Police and local community
- a safer route for cycles through the Chippendale area.

4.11 Social amenity

An overall increase in social amenity of the site, compared with the previous proposal, derives mainly from the following:

- the proposed increase in the extent of publicly accessible open space by 37.9%
- there is an increase in the size of the main park
- the overall increase in green space
- improved connections between areas of open space
- a better interface with Chippendale

4.12 Environmental amenity

The main community park continues to be protected from the noise and air quality impacts of heavy traffic flows along Abercrombie Street and will have an improved level of solar access compared with the previous Concept Plan.

The environmental amenity of future apartments will continue to be a matter for future consideration in terms of the principles contained in State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) No. 65 and the related Residential Flat Design Code. The proposed Concept Plan continues to ensure that general compliance with these principles and standards will be possible.

The reduction of vehicle traffic on the site is likely to improve the noise and air quality environment on site.

Residents and other occupants of the site will benefit from the environmental amenity provided by the increased landscaped character of the site, including the proposed green roofs.

5 Social aspects of future approvals

Social issues to be addressed in future approvals are likely to include the following:

5.1 Quality of the Public Domain

Detailed development proposals for the public domain will be bound by the Concept Approval, but will be required to show more detail as to how the intended social and other outcomes will be achieved.

5.2 Design and Development of Parks

Frasers will manage the design of the main community park, in consultation with the City of Sydney. They will consult on the design options available and the development of a preferred design.

A separate Project Application will be made for the main park. Other open spaces on the site are likely to be designed as part of development applications for particular buildings. The design of these open spaces from a social point of view will be subject to assessment by the consent authority at the time the development application is made.

5.3 SEPP No. 65 Considerations

Proposals for residential development on the site will be subject to SEPP No. 65 principles and the related Residential Flat Design Code (RFDC), which are intended to ensure, amongst other things, that the level of amenity of the apartments is acceptable. Applications for residential apartment developments will have to demonstrate that SEPP No. 65 criteria and RFDC standards are met to an acceptable degree for the developments to be approved.