

71 Macquarie Street, East Circular Quay (Amatil) MP10_0237

Submission to the Department of Planning of Planning and Infrastructure
29 February 2012





City of Sydney
ABN 22 636 550 790
GPO Box 1591 Sydney NSW 2001 Australia

Town Hall House 456 Kent Street Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Phone +61 2 9265 9333 Fax +61 2 9265 9222 TTY +61 2 9265 9276

council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

29 February 2012

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Recommendations.....	1
1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Background.....	3
2.1 This submission	3
2.0 Concept Plan	5
2.1 Vision for Circular Quay.....	5
2.1.1 Sydney City: Draft Subregional Strategy.....	5
2.1.2 Preliminary Circular Quay Strategic Plan.....	5
2.1.3 Sustainable Sydney 2030	6
2.2 Built form	6
2.2.1 Building envelope, height and Floor Space Ratio	6
2.2.2 Colonnade.....	7
2.2.3 Through-site link	8
2.3 Land uses	8
2.4 Traffic, access and parking.....	9
2.4.1 Basement car parking.....	9
3.0 Public domain improvements	11
3.3.1 Awning replacement	11
3.3.2 Kiosk relocation.....	12
3.3.3 Water feature/public art	13
3.3.4 Screening and lighting under Cahill Expressway.....	13
3.3.5 Retention of existing lifts.....	13
3.3.6 Retention of existing trees	13
4.0 Conclusion	15



Figure 1: The Amatil Building with East Circular Quay in the foreground.

Executive Summary

Circular Quay is one of Australia's premier tourist destinations. Embracing the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge, the Rocks heritage precinct, and the Sydney Botanic Gardens, it is a culturally-charged setting that attracts tourists from around the world.

Located within this precinct, and within the City of Sydney (the City) Local Government Area, the former Amatil building at 71 Macquarie Street is ideally located in East Circular Quay, mediating between the harbour and Central Sydney (**Figure 1**).

Any redevelopment of the site must be made with consideration of its internationally significant context, and should reflect on the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 goal to be 'Green, Global and Connected'.

A Part 3A Concept Plan has been lodged for the site and proposes the following:

- demolition of the existing commercial office building (former Amatil building);
- redevelopment at the height of the existing building, being RL 67 metres;
- extension of the new building over Council-owned road reserve directly adjoining the site;
- continuation and termination of the colonnade which exists to buildings north of the site;
- creation of a through-site link to Macquarie Street; and
- establishment of new residential and serviced apartment uses with some retail at ground level.

Recommendations

The City of Sydney generally supports the proposal subject to conditions. This submission makes the following recommendations which should be captured in appropriate approval conditions at the Concept Plan stage:

1. The development is limited in height to match the height of the existing building structure. This excludes the building structure that extends over Council's current road reserve which must comply with the height limit with in Sydney LEP 2005;
2. Permanent residential land use should be sufficiently separated from the public domain by being limited to floor levels above 9 storeys, with serviced apartments and commercial uses allocated from ground level to the 9th floor inclusive;
3. The new colonnade must match the height and width of the established colonnade to the north. At the new termination point of the colonnade, a public artwork or visually permeable screen should be design and built to the approval of Council;

4. The public space within the colonnade extension is to be held as a stratum in favour of the City of Sydney, consistent with the existing colonnade at the buildings to the north along East Circular Quay;
5. A through-site link (in the form of a staircase) between the colonnade and Macquarie Street is to be incorporated in any consent between the landowner and the consent authority;
6. The public space of the through-site link referred to in 4 and 5 is to be held as a stratum in favour of the City of Sydney, consistent with the colonnade extension;
7. The soffit above the through-site link is to be designed to retain the full height as proposed at Macquarie Street to ensure an unobstructed open view for pedestrians looking up to Macquarie Street from East Circular Quay;
8. Given the site's proximity to all forms of public transport including Circular Quay railway station, ferry wharves, buses, and a future light rail link and also given the negative impacts of traffic congestion on Central Sydney, car parking must not exceed the City's current controls prescribed in the Sydney LEP 2005;
9. The proponent must provide documentation that demonstrates why the proposed basement entry point is preferred over an entry point that is accessed from underneath the Cahill Expressway, behind (to the east of) the rail viaduct abutment structure;
10. The City requests that Section 61 contributions, under the *City of Sydney Act 1988*, are made payable as part of any subsequent Project Approval or DA approval; and
11. Adjustments to the adjoining public domain will be required to accommodate changes in usage levels and movement patterns associated with the redevelopment of the site. The City will require a series of public domain improvements by the Proponent to be linked with any future redevelopment application for the site. Public improvement works to be provided include:
 - a. Removal of existing glass awning and replacement with a new glass awning;
 - b. Removal of existing kiosk and replacement in a new location;
 - c. Provision of new water feature or public artwork;
 - d. Retention of existing trees, with relocation where required; and
 - e. Ancillary upgrades to paving, signage, lighting, screening etc.
12. A design competition consistent with City of Sydney requirements is required prior to the lodgement of a Project Application or DA.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Situated between the Quay Grand Hotel and the Cahill Expressway at 71-79 Macquarie Street, the former Amatil building is a 1960s-constructed commercial office building in Sydney's state-significant Circular Quay precinct. Landowner AMP Capital, in partnership with developer Mirvac, is now proposing to undertake redevelopment of the site.

The site is identified in Clause 10(1) of 'Schedule 2 Part 3A Projects – specified sites' in the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005*. As the capital value of the redevelopment exceeds \$5 million, at the time of lodgement, it was eligible to be considered as a Part 3A project.

On 16 December 2010, the proponents lodged a Part 3A application with the Department of Planning. On 4 March 2011, the Director General's Requirements (DGRs) were issued to the proponents.

As the DGRs were issued prior to April 2011, under the now Department for Planning and Infrastructure's transitional provisions relating to Part 3 applications, it remains a Part 3A project and the Minister, his delegate or the Planning Assessment Commission, is now the determining authority.

On Tuesday 18 October 2011, the City undertook a workshop with key stakeholders and Design Advisory Panel members to discuss preliminary urban design principles and the relevance of the Preliminary Circular Quay Strategic Plan in shaping the renewal of the public domain adjoining the site. A number of urban design recommendations arose in this meeting, which are addressed in this submission.

In December 2011, the proponents lodged a Concept Plan with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The Concept Plan has been placed on public exhibition from 18 January until 29 February 2012.

2.1 This submission

This submission has been prepared to respond to both the proposed Concept Plan as well as related adjoining public domain improvements. It is acknowledged that the Concept Plan does not directly address the public domain located immediately adjacent to the site; however the two components are intrinsically linked and are therefore jointly addressed in this submission to ensure consistency in future development applications.

It is anticipated that the Central Sydney Planning Committee (CSPC), a committee of Council, will be the determining authority for any future development applications and subsequently this Concept Plan must reflect Council's intentions for the site.

2.0 Concept Plan

2.1 Vision for Circular Quay

The vision for Circular Quay can be found in a range of strategic planning documents. These documents have been reviewed to ensure the proposed redevelopment is considered holistically and in context with the future direction for Circular Quay and surrounds.

2.1.1 Sydney City: Draft Subregional Strategy

This strategy, prepared by the Department of Planning in 2008, sets out the overarching direction for Central Sydney to 2031.

The Concept Plan meets the following key directions in the Subregional Strategy:

- Ensure adequate capacity for new office and hotel developments.

The proposed redevelopment will replace existing commercial office space with residential apartments, serviced apartments and commercial and retail areas. Such uses are considered more appropriate for the area due to its proximate location to key tourist attractions.

- Improve the quality of the built and natural environment while decreasing the subregion's ecological footprint.

The existing building was constructed in the mid-1960s and is unlikely to meet today's stringent sustainability standards set out in current planning and building controls. The redevelopment offers the opportunity to replace the existing building with a contemporary building that will reduce the site's ecological footprint through improved energy efficiency and sustainability measures.

- Enhance the subregion's prominence as a diverse global cultural centre.

The site is located near the national and internationally significant sites of the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge, and the Rocks. Its redevelopment will bring the site into line with the standard of built form existing in the area to enhance the visitor experience and better reflect the area's cultural prominence.

2.1.2 Preliminary Circular Quay Strategic Plan

A preliminary long term vision for Circular Quay was prepared by Hassell and the Government Architect's Office on behalf of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) and the previous State government in 2010. The vision provides the most recent long-term strategic direction for the area based on comprehensive urban design and architectural analysis. However, the City had no direct involvement in its preparation and,

as it has not been endorsed by Cabinet, it holds no formal status. Notwithstanding this, the proposed Concept Plan generally aligns with this vision. The SHFA Plan is referenced throughout this submission in relation to individual elements of the proposal.

2.1.3 Sustainable Sydney 2030

The City is committed to achieving high quality urban environments while protecting residential amenity and local character, encouraging a diversified and competitive economy, and supporting environmental sustainability. The City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan incorporates these strategic objectives into actionable steps to make Sydney 'green, global and connected'.

The Concept Plan is considered to meet the intent of Sustainable Sydney 2030, in particular the strategic directions of planning for 'a city for pedestrians and cyclists', 'a lively, engaging City Centre', and 'sustainable development, renewal and design'.

2.2 Built form

2.2.1 Building envelope, height and Floor Space Ratio

The proposed building envelope and expected Floor Space Ratio (FSR) are in line with the City's expectations for the site.

The existing building has 16 levels of occupied floor space, currently occupied by office uses, two basement levels, and a rooftop plant room. The Concept Plan retains the height of the existing building, while expanding the lower floors over the Council-owned road reserve, to align with buildings to the north.

At RL 67 metres, the height proposed exceeds that prescribed in the *Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2005* (Sydney LEP 2005), being a maximum of RL 46.7 metres.

LEP 2005 classifies Circular Quay as a 'Special Area' with one of the objectives being: 'to reinforce the urban character and scale of Circular Quay by requiring new buildings to be built to the street alignment, and to have a transition of building heights from Circular Quay to the maximum building height of the northern area of Central Sydney'.

Subsequently, the City is not opposed to the proposed height as it meets the broader strategic planning objectives for the area, retains solar access to the Sydney Botanic Gardens and will not create overshadowing issues to nearby properties, does not pose any significant impediments to current views from neighbouring properties, and does not propose any increase to height other than the plan area of what is currently existing on site.

Design excellence will need to be demonstrated through a design competition at the development application stage, in accordance with Clause 12.2 of the *Central Sydney Development Control Plan 1996*.

2.2.2 Colonnade

The proposal includes an extension of the colonnade existing on buildings north of the site. The City supports the proposed extension of the colonnade as it reflects the vision in the draft Master Plan, it continues the existing built form pattern in the area, and it will create continuity of the pedestrian experience at ground level (refer **Figure 2**).



Figure 2: The Concept Plan will provide a termination point for the existing colonnade, which currently concludes with the vehicular access to the Quay Grand apartment building.

The proposed colonnade would extend over Council-owned road reserve directly in front of the building and will subsequently require the land to be purchased at a later stage. A

similar land purchase from Council was undertaken with the Quay Grand Hotel, Medina Grand Apartments and “toaster” buildings to the north of the subject site.

The new colonnade should match the height and width of the established colonnade. At the new termination point of the colonnade, an artwork or visually permeable screen should be erected to minimise views of the overpass and vehicle access.

As per the existing colonnade arrangement, the future stratum under the extended colonnade should be placed in the City’s ownership.

2.2.3 Through-site link

A through-site link is proposed as part of the site’s redevelopment, to link East Circular Quay with Macquarie Street and the Sydney Botanic Gardens. The link will be in the form of a stair within the building, running parallel with the Cahill Expressway.

Despite the lack of an identified desire line for pedestrian movement between these areas, the proposed through-site link is supported as it will create a view corridor and physical connection between these two prominent areas, and provides an active termination point to the future extension of the colonnade.

The soffit above the stairway should be designed to retain the full height as proposed, to ensure its legibility for pedestrians from East Circular Quay. A future stratum should be established within the through-site link identical to that which exists under the existing colonnade. This stratum should be placed within the City’s ownership.

2.3 Land uses

The current building’s office use reflects an earlier outdated period in Circular Quay’s history and no longer corresponds with the predominantly tourist-related nature of surrounding land uses. The redevelopment proposes approximately 103 serviced and residential apartments, with limited commercial retail uses on lower floors.

The proposed land uses are generally considered to be in keeping with the rest of East Circular Quay, and will add additional tourist accommodation near the City’s key visitor attractions.

The City is, however, concerned with providing for further permanent residential development in this location due to the vibrant public nature of the location. It is fundamental that there be a significant separation between the ground level activity and permanent residential development. In addition, the serviced apartment uses and the residential use should not be contained on the same floor and should be provided with separate access points and separate vertical circulation. To avoid the potential of perceived privatisation of this area, permanent residential development should be

sufficiently separated from the public domain by being limited to floor levels above nine storeys, with serviced apartments and commercial uses allocated from ground level to the ninth floor.

2.4 Traffic, access and parking

2.4.1 Basement car parking

The development seeks to increase parking provision by extending the footprint of an existing stratum lease beneath Macquarie Street. The proposed parking supply significantly exceeds both the Sydney LEP 2005 and the Draft City Plan controls. It will introduce additional vehicle traffic to and from Central Sydney, further congest Macquarie Street, and may result in conflict with existing and future bus routes.

Given the site's proximity to all forms of public transport including Circular Quay railway station, ferry wharves, buses, and a future light rail link, the car parking must not exceed the City's current controls prescribed in the Sydney LEP 2005. We note that the provision of car parking as proposed also conflicts with the DGRs which requires 'the demonstration of a minimalist approach to car parking provision'.

Bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities should also be accommodated within the basement, in line with the *New South Wales Planning Guidelines to Walking and Cycling*.

2.4.2 Road reserve and vehicle access

The East Circular Quay roadway was completed in the 1840s and vested in the Council as owner. With the redevelopment of sites to the north, the road was gradually closed and the portion outside the subject site is all that remains (refer **Figure 3**). The proposal seeks to extend the building over a Council-owned road reserve in order to continue the colonnade which exists on buildings to the north of the site. The City supports the closure of this remaining portion of road reserve for this purpose.

It should be noted that the proponent will be required to lodge a separate development application for the closure of this portion of road reserve in line with the requirements of section 116 of the *Roads Act 1993*.

The proposal to provide an underground link to Quay Grand in accordance with the existing Breakthrough Deed is supported as it removes all remaining vehicular traffic from East Circular Quay, clearing the ground plane to allow for exclusive pedestrian access in this area.



Figure 3: The Concept Plan will see the removal of all remaining vehicular traffic from East Circular Quay.

Consideration should be given in the design to the potential future removal of the overhead Cahill Expressway in the design of basement car parking. Its removal will reconfigure traffic in this area and the development may require alternative access points in the future.

The proponent should provide documentation that demonstrates why the proposed basement entry point is preferred over an entry point that is accessed from underneath the Cahill Expressway behind the masonry abutment. It should also consider access impacts from neighbouring sites including the Royal Automobile Club, Quay East and the Sydney Opera House tunnel.

3.0 Public domain improvements

3.1 Rationale

The redevelopment of the site will trigger the need to reconfigure the adjoining public domain to support the new building and its users. The proposed redevelopment and associated public domain works will increase activity to this underutilised corner of Circular Quay, improve access to adjoining streets, provide better pedestrian amenity and circulation, and complete the East Circular Quay built form and colonnade.

The public domain works proposed involve the relocation, replacement and/or upgrading of existing elements to maintain a high quality public realm at the interface with development along the length of East Circular Quay.

A preliminary set of anticipated public domain improvements are contained within **Attachment 1 - Public Domain Improvements Plan**. These should be referenced in any approval.

3.2 Development Contributions and works-in-kind

Under Section 61 of the *City of Sydney Act 1988*, the proponent would normally be required to pay development contributions at a rate of one per cent (1%) of the cost of the proposed development, as estimated by the consent authority. The City requests that these contributions are required as part of any future development.

The City would support the public domain as part of a works-in-kind package.

3.3 Public domain elements to be addressed

This section identifies the elements of the existing public domain which require upgrading as part of any future redevelopment of the site.

3.3.1 Awning replacement

The City supports the replacement of the existing awning; however, we note that the proposed new awning offers a direct travel path to Macquarie Street, rather than the existing wet weather access to Circular Quay as provided by the current awning, which provides a sweeping path alongside the promenade that more closely reflects pedestrian desire lines.

The City may require that the new awning be designed in consultation with an artist or specialist designer/architect. This may vary the awning's final form to better reflect the desire line of pedestrian traffic heading towards the Sydney Opera House, and enhance the identity and sense of place in this location.

3.3.2 Kiosk relocation

The existing Arc Café, owned by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA), is proposed to be relocated to the west side of the existing lifts, closer to the Cahill Expressway. The café was originally situated, in part, to screen vehicular access running in front of the Amatil building which will no longer be required following the site's redevelopment (refer **Figure 4**). The City supports the kiosk's relocation and proposed footprint.

A kiosk in this location will engage the space with an active use, encouraging interaction and passive surveillance. Broader uses for the kiosk could be considered by SHFA, such as introducing a ticketing booth for events at the Opera House.



Figure 4: The existing Arc Café should be relocated as part of any future public domain works.

3.3.3 Water feature/public art

The City may potentially support the inclusion of a new water feature and/or public art element in this area however this would subject to further discussion and a separate application.

Given the site's proximity to Sydney Harbour, a public art element rather than a water feature is considered more appropriate. A linear element that might obstruct pedestrian movement throughout the area should be avoided.

3.3.4 Screening and lighting under Cahill Expressway

The extension of the colonnade and the new awning to abut the existing Cahill Expressway will bring pedestrian movement closer to vehicles accessing the site from under the Expressway.

Visually permeable screening and lighting should be provided under the Expressway between the new colonnade and the existing lifts. Screening and lighting will help to maintain streetscape amenity in this area, by defining the edge of the public domain, shielding views of the overpass and 'back of house' area of neighbouring buildings, and by increasing security. Paving improvements should be made to the existing vehicle access path from Alfred Street, to enhance the quality of finishes in this area to a standard appropriate to a visible part of the public domain.

3.3.5 Retention of existing lifts

There are currently lifts that can be accessed from behind the Arc Café and take pedestrians up to the footpath along the Cahill Expressway. The City has considered whether there is merit in incorporating the lifts into the public domain renovation; however, the existing lifts would still serve their purpose, and in fact would receive greater weather protection from the proposed new awning. Consequently, no change to the existing lifts is required.

3.3.6 Retention of existing trees

There is an existing pepper tree located in front of the existing building, and behind the Arc Café (refer **Figure 5**). This tree is identified in the draft Master Plan and ideally should be retained, though it would require relocation in order to accommodate the new development.

There is a grove of cabbage palms located in front of the existing café, dispersed among the outdoor seating area. It is proposed that these trees be relocated into a formation better suited to the redevelopment, and the City accepts this, provided that the quality of the trees is not compromised. The City may place a bond on each of the trees to ensure their protection during and after relocation.

3.3.7 Other considerations

The City requires specific items as part of any future public domain works. These are outlined in **Attachment 1** and include replacement of disturbed existing pavement, upgraded pavement surfaces and kerbing to trafficable areas, new street furniture such as bins, benches and bollards, and signage replacements.

Finally, it is important to note that any future development application will be subject to the City's standard controls relating to planning, building, health, engineering and others as required.



Figure 5: A pepper tree exists in front of the existing building.

4.0 Conclusion

The Concept Plan for 71 Macquarie Street represents the timely rejuvenation of an outdated building in one of Australia's most iconic locations.

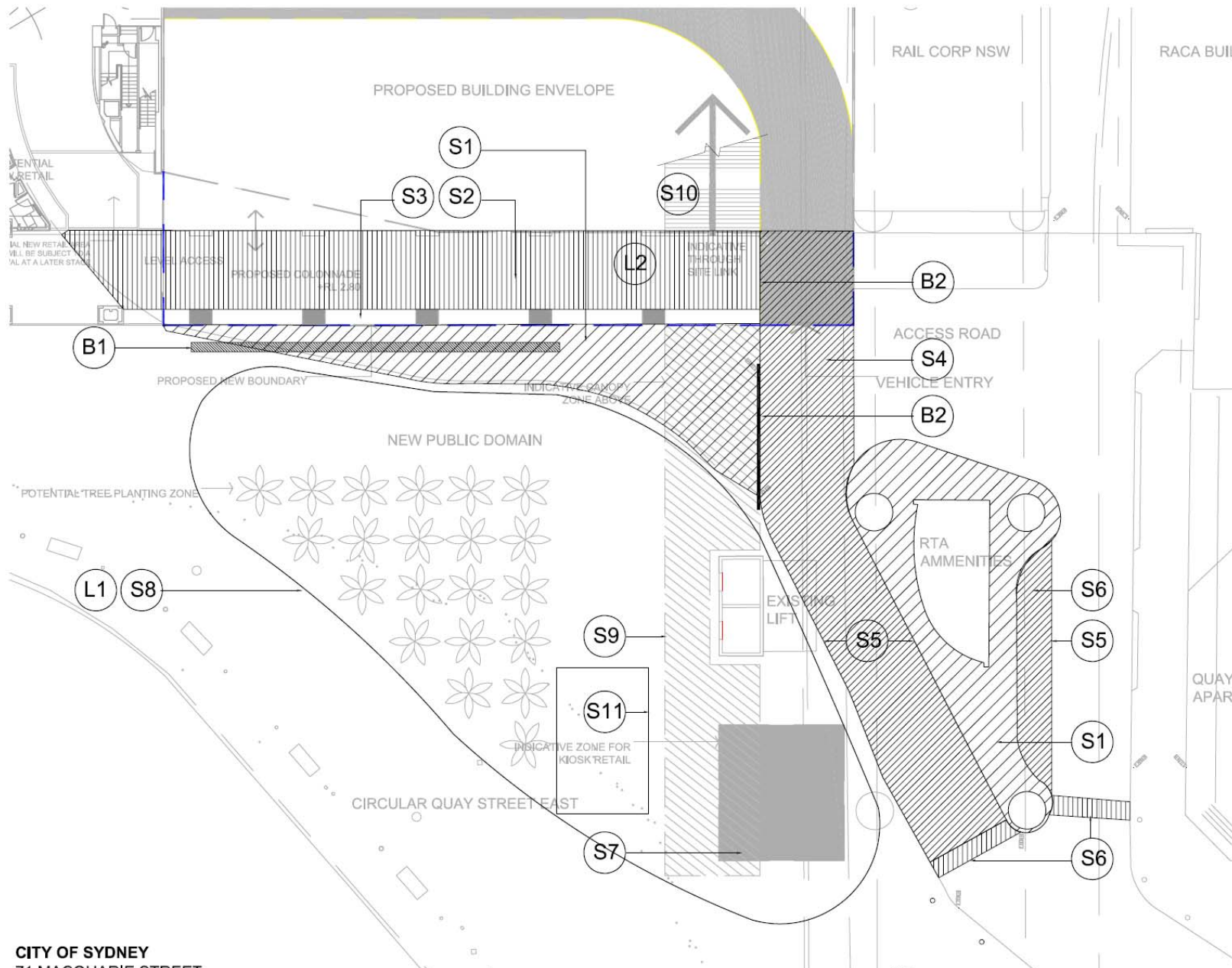
The proposal will enable the completion of the initial vision for East Circular Quay by bringing the built form into line with neighbouring development. The last remaining vehicular traffic will be removed from what is now a predominantly pedestrianised space. View lines between the Quay and Macquarie Street will be improved while existing views of the area from nearby properties will be maintained.

The proposed redevelopment and renewed public domain will revitalise this otherwise underutilised corner of Sydney's waterfront.

Provided this submission's concerns are addressed, the City generally supports the Concept Plan subject to conditions precedent to a subsequent Project Application or detailed Development Application.



Appendix A
Public Domain Improvements Plan



- KEY**
- Structures / Pavement**
- S1. Replace existing vehicular access with pedestrian pavement to match adjacent.
 - S2. Granite paving or tiling to Colonnade to match existing adjacent (Quay Grand).
 - S3. Contrast granite paving to edge of colonnade - to match adjacent existing.
 - S4. Upgraded pavement to new vehicular access zone (shared surface treatment).
 - S5. 200mm Trachyte kerb. Flush or raised as appropriate.
 - S6. New paving to car parking and ramps in existing locations.
 - S7. New cafe structure (existing to be demolished). Internal fitout to match standard of existing cafe.
 - S8. New paving in place of demolished canopy structure, cafe and relocated palms.
 - S9. New canopy structure.
 - S10. New public stairway to Macquarie Street.
 - S11. Possible outdoor dining area associated with future kiosk.
- Fixtures / Furniture**
- F1. Bollards - Allow for 6 new droppable bollards to shared surface near Alfred Street.
 - F2. Lighting - replace or relocate existing lighting provision.
 - F3. Seating - allow 2 no. City of Sydney standard (City Centre).
 - F4. Signage - existing signage to be replaced.
 - F5. Bins - allow 1 no. City of Sydney standard (City Centre).
- Special / Bespoke elements**
- B1. Linear water feature / Public Art element.
 - B2. New vertical screen structure to min. 6m height x 5m wide.
- Tree Planting**
- L1. Existing palms to be relocated into new layout, Relocation of existing, or installation of new, in ground uplights to palm trees.
 - L2. Relocation of existing Pepper Tree.
- NOTES:**
1. Refer to City of Sydney Interim Sydney Streets Design Code for material/product specifications.
 2. Allow for regrading as necessary to make an even grade of surface in pedestrian areas.