

Council Ref: HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project (SC5214 Ref: 19/172263)
Planning & Development Division

Office
of the
Mayor

Woollahra
Municipal
Council



29 October 2019

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
C/o - Committee Secretary
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

cc. Submitted online <https://www.aph.gov.au>

Dear Committee members

Project name: HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project

Address: 1 Watson Road, Watsons Bay

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the abovementioned public works project.

On Monday 21 October 2019, the Department of Defence kindly provided a Councillor briefing on the works proposed under the HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project (the Redevelopment Project). It is understood that, the aim of the Redevelopment Project is to address functionality deficiencies and capacity constraints in the facilities and infrastructure at HMAS Watson, and the project comprises of the following Work Elements:

- Work Element 1: Construct a new Training Precinct;
- Work Element 2: Upgrade and refurbish Base Engineering Services, including fire/potable water, communications networks, and civil infrastructure;
- Work Element 3: Install new Base Security Systems;
- Work Element 4: Refurbish the existing Galleys;
- Work Element 5: Construct new Trainee Living In Accommodation for at least 236 students, plus consequential works; and
- Work Element 6: Construct replacement car parking.

Council has reviewed the Statement of Evidence to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (the Statement of Evidence) and understands the general philosophy for the design set out under paragraph 47, but provides the following comments in relation to the impacts of the Redevelopment Project:

1. Access to documents

The Statement of Evidence makes reference to supporting documents which are not available on the Parliament of Australia Website (<https://www.aph.gov.au>). These include:

- details of the mechanical services, hydraulic services, electrical services, fire protection measures, security measures, and landscape design;
- the architectural drawings;

- the Visual Impact Assessment;
- the Heritage Impact Assessment; and
- the Environmental Report.

It is requested that these supporting documents are made available to Council, prior to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (the Committee) finalising their inquiry and report, to enable Council to consider and comment upon the impacts of the Redevelopment Project. In the absence of this information Council has been unable to comment on many of the potential impacts of the proposal.

The Committee should, prior to finalising their inquiry and report, satisfy itself that the proposal:

- is acceptable with regards to parking and traffic generation impacts;
- will not place increased pressure on the biodiversity values of the site, or the adjoining Key Habitat Areas;
- maintains the landscape character of the locality, and provides appropriate replacement trees;
- prevents unreasonable light spillage;
- provides adequate stormwater and flood management measures;
- demonstrates how the six year 'staged' construction period will be managed without causing unreasonable impacts to surrounding land;
- maintains the heritage significance of the subject site;
- considers the possibility of improving public access along the foreshore; and
- will not present a security risk for the residents and visitors of Watsons Bay.

The following comments are based solely on the limited information provided in the Statement of Evidence.

2. Increased trainee numbers, traffic generation and car parking impacts

The Statement of Evidence, at paragraph 23 states that "the HMAS *Watson* Redevelopment aims to maximise the number of trainee rooms to accommodate increased trainee numbers". Whilst Council understands the need to increase the training capacity this should be done without exacerbating the existing car parking issues within Watsons Bay, or adversely impacting upon the surrounding road network.

The occupancy of on-street parking in Watsons Bay is regularly close to saturation due to visitors and residents without off-street parking generating significant on-street parking demand.

At paragraph 25, the Statement of Evidence states that "Car parking at HMAS Watson is constrained, and at peak training periods is in very high demand...The minimum requirement for car parking is to replace the spaces lost due to the construction of the new facilities, and where possible, to increase the numbers of dedicated spaces to increase capacity".

A traffic report should be provided which identifies the parking requirements for the total number of trainees proposed under the Redevelopment Project. The parking requirements should be based on parking surveys from similar developments.

Sufficient additional car parking should be provided within the site to accommodate the increased trainee numbers as the overspill from the proposed development will unlikely be readily accommodated on-street.

The traffic report should determine the traffic generation which will result from the increase in trainee numbers, and assess the impact the additional traffic will have upon the surrounding road network. This is particularly important, given that during the peak hour the current traffic volumes in Cliff Street are 283% over the environmental goal and 189% over the recommended maximum volumes for local streets.

3. Construction Traffic Management Plan

It is noted that a Construction Traffic Management Plan is currently being prepared. It is requested that the finalised Construction Traffic Management Plan is provided to Council for approval to ensure the Redevelopment Project does not unreasonably impact on the surrounding road network, specifically in relation to vehicle traffic during construction.

The Construction Traffic Management Plan should outline the nature of the construction project and, as applicable, include the following information:

- a) Detail the scope of the works to be completed including details of the various stages, e.g. demolition, excavation, construction etc. and the duration of each stage.
- b) Identify local traffic routes to be used by construction vehicles.
- c) Identify ways to manage construction works to address impacts on local traffic routes.
- d) Identify other developments that may be occurring in the area and identify ways to minimise the cumulative traffic impact of these developments. Should other developments be occurring in close proximity (500m or in the same street) to the subject site, the developer/builder is to liaise fortnightly with the other developers/builders undertaking work in the area in order to minimise the cumulative traffic and parking impacts of the developments.
- e) Detail how construction workers will travel to and from the site and parking arrangements for those that drive.
- f) Identify any proposed road closures, temporary traffic routes, loss of pedestrian or cyclist access or reversing manoeuvres onto a public road and provide Traffic Control Plans (TCPs) prepared by an accredited RMS Red or Orange card holder to manage these temporary changes.
- g) Detail the size (including dimensions), numbers and frequency of arrival of the construction vehicles that will service the site for each stage of works.
- h) Provide for the standing of vehicles during construction.
- i) If construction vehicles are to be accommodated on the site, provide a scaled drawing showing where these vehicles will stand and the vehicle swept path to show that these vehicles can access and egress the site in a forward direction (including dimensions and all adjacent traffic control devices, such as parking restrictions, pedestrian facilities, kerb extensions, etc.).
- j) If trucks are to be accommodated on Council property, provide a scaled drawing showing the location of any proposed Works Zone (including dimensions and all adjacent traffic control devices, such as parking restrictions, pedestrian facilities, kerb extensions, etc.).
- k) Show the location of any site sheds and any anticipated use of cranes and concrete pumps and identify the relevant permits that will be required.
- l) If a crane/s are to be accommodated on site, detail how the crane/s will be erected and removed, including the location, number and size of vehicles involved in the erection/removal of the crane/s, the duration of the operation and the proposed day and times, any full or partial road closures required to erect or remove the crane/s and appropriate Traffic Control Plans (TCPs) prepared by an approved RMS Red or Orange Card holder.

- m) Make provision for all materials, plant, etc. to be stored within the development site at all times during construction.
- n) State that any oversized vehicles proposed to operate on Council property (including Council approved Works Zones) will attain a Permit to Stand Plant on each occasion (Note: oversized vehicles are vehicles longer than 7.5m or heavier than 4.5T.)
- o) Show the location of any proposed excavation and estimated volumes.
- p) When demolition, excavation and construction works are to be undertaken on school days, all vehicular movements associated with this work shall only be undertaken between the hours of 9.30am and 2.30pm, in order to minimise disruption to the traffic network during school pick up and drop off times.
- q) Show the location of all Tree Protection (Exclusion) zones (Note: storage of building materials or access through Reserve will not be permitted without prior approval by Council).

4. Biodiversity Impacts

In the absence of the Environment Report, Council is unable to make detailed comment on the environmental impact of the proposal. However, it is important for the Committee to note that HMAS Watson is listed in Council's Biodiversity Strategy (2015) as a Local Habitat Area, and the adjoining South Head, and Gap Bluff are listed as two of ten Key Habitat Areas in the Woollahra LGA. Key Habitat Areas are fundamental to the future viability of biodiversity in Woollahra, supporting native vegetation and providing foraging and breeding habitat for fauna species.

Council's Biodiversity Strategy states the following regarding HMAS Watson's biodiversity value:

- listed flora species include: Sydney Golden Wattle, Sunshine Wattle (an endangered flora species), Giant Maidenhead Fern, Scaly Tree Fern, and Tick Bush; and
- there have been records of the Common Eastern Froglet, and Dark-Flecked Garden Sunskink.

Council's Biodiversity Strategy states the following regarding South Head's biodiversity value:

- there has been records of the Sooty Oyster Catcher (a vulnerable species);
- remnant vegetation includes: Coastal Headland Banksia Heath, Clifftop Sedges and Grassland, and Coastal Sandstone Foreshores Forest; and
- there is a history of landfill and ongoing disturbance and a corresponding high level of weed invasion.

Council's Biodiversity Strategy states the following regarding Gap Bluff's biodiversity value:

- it is habitat for the endangered plant species *Acacia terminalis* subsp. *Terminalis*;
- remnant vegetation includes: Coastal Headland Banksia Heath; and
- the area is known habitat for the threatened Powerful Owl.

South Head, HMAS Watson and Gap Bluff are part of an important wildlife corridor, enabling movement of animals and transfer of plants through dispersal of seed and pollen. Ecological connectivity is vital to the long term viability of native fauna and remnant vegetation. These corridors are particularly important in highly urban areas and must be protected. Tree canopy and other vegetation on site should be retained to ensure that these corridors can continue to function. Post construction landscaping should use species that are endemic to South Head.

The Committee should be satisfied that the works proposed under the Redevelopment Project, including the environmental and acoustic impacts which will occur during the six year staged construction period, will not place increased pressure on the biodiversity values of the site or the adjoining Key Habitat Areas. It is requested that the Committee confirms that the Redevelopment Project is not required to be referred to the Minister of Environment and Energy under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

5. Stormwater and Flooding

The Statement of Evidence and a subsequent meeting between consultant representatives of the Department of Defence and Council Officers, indicates that upgrades to on-site detention/retention, stormwater catchment and treatment facilities are proposed.

A stormwater report should be provided detailing the size and type of stormwater infrastructure proposed, supported with hydraulic calculations.

Council strongly supports the proposed installation of two stormwater catchment and treatment systems in order to ensure runoff from carparks and roads is adequately treated prior to discharge in Sydney Harbour. A report detailing the size and type of treatment infrastructure proposed, supported by modelling with MUSIC or equivalent, should be provided.

Council's DCP Chapter E2 – Stormwater and Flood Risk Management and the Watsons Bay Flood Risk Management Study and Plan, dated May 2016, should be considered in the stormwater report.

6. Potential to improve public access to the national park

Public access to the eastern side of South Head is currently unavailable. Council requests that consideration is given to siting the proposed security fencing in a location which would enable the potential future establishment of a public coastal footpath to improve public access along the foreshore.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity of providing advice on the HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project.

If you require clarification on any issue raised, please don't hesitate to contact **Nick Economou**, Manager – Development Control [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

Cr Susan Wynne
Mayor