



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

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Mr Steve Kourepis
Director Town Planning
Hunters Hill Council
22 Alexandra Street
Hunters Hill NSW 2110

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Via email: info@huntershill.nsw.gov.au

Copy to: All Councillors

Dear Mr Kourepis

Re: DA 20230094 Amended Planning Proposal Woolwich Marina Expansion - 2C Margaret Street Woolwich NSW 2110 – Statement of Heritage Impact

Hunters Hill Trust would like to register our strong objections to the Amended Planning Proposal of Woolwich Marina and statements made within the recently released **Statement of Heritage Impact** (SoHI) submitted by Michael Fountain Architects Pty Ltd, currently on public exhibition on Council's website in the lead up to Land and Environment Court Proceedings in September.

We find the SoHI seeks to greatly minimise or down play the massive **intrusions** and **distortions** of the visual impacts to the heritage values and significance of this sensitive area of Sydney Harbour.

The views and vistas, to and from land and water, general loss of public amenity and recreational use within this sensitive area of Sydney Harbour, a renowned **Heritage Precinct** with connections encompassing Woolwich Dock Parklands, Kelly's Bush, Cockatoo Island, Spectacle Island and Snapper Island, cannot be understated. We find the irreverence and disrespect shown for this historic and heritage listed area, where the Parramatta River joins the harbour, Moocooboola 'meeting of waters', to be profound.

Further, Kelly's Bush is the site of the First Green Ban in the world. The community fought hard to retain this bushland area, one of only two treed headlands remaining on the western side of the Harbour Bridge, and eventually secured by the State government for '**public use in perpetuity**'.

(The Summary (p.47)/ The SoHI seeks to minimise and obfuscate the true issues of incompatibility of an enlarged Marina given its environmental surrounds, all to accommodate and privatise an on-water carpark for a select few, 79 owners of a larger (up to 25m) bulkier class of mostly motor boats, many several storeys high, that will obliterate and block all current views along pathways of the Horse Paddock and Kelly's Bush Park.

This proposal also seeks further privatisation of more than 18,000 square metres of Sydney Harbour, a public asset and resource, owned by the public, to be protected for the public good, the public good having precedence over the private good (**SEPP(B&C) 2021 Part 6, Division 3, 6.28**). It is perhaps unsurprising there was no reference made to the above in the SoHI yet it's an important consideration which should not be overlooked.

The only welcome reading to be found was Worley Parsons (2009) description of this area as beingof high natural, historical, cultural and aesthetic importance..... a place of outstanding national and international phenomena, the location of the three islands – Cockatoo, Snapper and Spectacle Islands and the social and cultural importance as an established place of maritime, industrial and recreational uses. **(P.25 SoHI 4.1)**

Currently, the public enjoy virtually uninterrupted views from Kelly's Bush Foreshore Park, a State Listed Heritage Item where you can see Cockatoo Island for what it is, **an Island**. If this proposal succeeds, this aspect or 'connection' or 'meeting of waters' will be lost forever.

Other Observations

This development will severely impact all recreational visitors and users of Kelly's Bush and Kelly's Bush Park. The **foreshore and pathway** is rarely mentioned or identified within the SoHI. This needs to be challenged given it is perhaps the **most impacted area of high heritage significance**.

The proposal seeks to more than double the size of the existing Marina **westward** which will greatly impact views by closing off and dominating the complete shoreline beneath Kelly's Bush, with a massing line of boats forming a visual obstruction to panoramic views.

The site itself is within a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) surrounded by items listed on World, State, Federal and Local Heritage Registers. Some of the suburb's most historic homes are located in adjoining streets including 'Woodstock', one of the oldest.

P. 27 Fig 31: Detail, Heritage Map Heritage items and conservation areas in the vicinity of the site. While this heritage map clearly demonstrates the marina site is totally surrounded by heritage items **it is deceptive** with large arrow along the eastern side rather than **western side where the New marina expansion will create a massive visual intrusion**. Why not indicate with a large arrow where proposed site will be, **westward of current marina beneath a significant heritage site and foreshore park**.

The SoHI lacked a clean Figure/drawing to clearly demonstrate the impact of **NEW marina expansion, a massing of boats westward blocking the view directly in front of Kelly's Bush Park and foreshore pathway**.

A Figure/drawing of the **New Marina being proposed** could only be found on **P.s 41& 45** (Figures 45 & 46) however the block rendering of enormous red mooring circles, which are to be relinquished, **completely camouflaged the NEW drawing of marina expansion westward along Kelly's Bush** and seemingly hid the lines of boats beneath.

P. 34, 4.5 Views towards the Woolwich Marina Although there is a separate Visual Impact Assessment Report (VIAR), the series of 11 photos that span pages 35 to 40 of the SoHI showing views towards the existing marina, contribute next to nothing to the substantive issue about views to and from and within this extraordinary heritage precinct. Likewise, the absence of a clean diagram of where the NEW Marina will be positioned on Sydney Harbour, westward along the foreshore of a State listed Heritage Item is nothing short or disrespectful for the heritage values that surround this unique and historic site on the Parramatta River, rich in maritime history.

P. 41 6.1 Second Dot Point- suggests.....*The proposed works will be a modest expansion.....and..... will not have a significant impact on the character of the HCA.* One might ask where within this report does it mention intrusion on waterways as part of heritage assessment or heritage significance?

Under this proposal the view for walkers, hikers, kayakers and other recreational users will be **'a wall of boats' with one minor view corridor**, (the gap point where boats enter the marina) **rather than the current panoramic vista across to Cockatoo Island**. Such loss will greatly impact the peaceful and natural amenity and enjoyment factor of the natural bushland setting and strolling alongside Sydney Harbour.

P.44 Cockatoo Island 3rd Dot point At last an acknowledgement of Loss of Views can be found within the SoHI!

Views along the Kelly's Bush shoreline towards the item will be marginally impacted.....Kelly's Bush is raised above the waterline and Cockatoo Island is at such a distance that its form is visible above the bulk of marine vessels moored or berthed in the area.

This is an unacceptable conclusion to draw when current sight lines allow to view Cockatoo Island as an island, with shoreline clearly visible.

P.44 4th Dot Point states –

...Cockatoo Island has a range of expansive view corridors all around the harbour area. The proposed works only impacts one small view corridor towards the Island which has 360degree views to allow an understanding of the heritage item.

The impact isn't small, it's large obliterating a view from another State listed Heritage site. Why must there be **a need for a view corridor** when none currently exist? Clearly inadequate compensation for the losses of protected views.

P. 46 Figure 47 Photo – A deliberate minimisation of visual impact with camera positioned a long way back. Had photo been taken from Kelly's Bush foreshore pathway you would be staring at nothing but a wall or block of flats made of boats.

Throughout the SoHI we're told proposed works will only have.....*a minimal impact, or...no impact ...or.....will not block, screen or obscure views to and from Kelly's Bush to Sydney Harbour, Cockatoo Island and Spectacle Island.....or...will have a minor impact on one small portion of these views....or...works are an extension to the existing marina in an ongoing historical activity on the harbour....*A questionable statement given the marina has not operated as a working marina for some time.

The SoHI (P.42&44) specifically uses the word '**iconic**' to describe the view. A good choice given **iconic** can be defined as exemplary, a force to shape identity, classical, historic, important. How then can it be suggested the loss of such an **iconic existing view** can be compensated for or replaced by *a fragmented designa view corridor.....*? It simply can't! The amended planning proposal is **totally incompatible** with its surrounds within a heritage precinct where the water plane itself, views and vistas are protected by development control plans and these connections are considered of heritage value!

The legislation is clear.

This proposal is at odds with the aims of the **State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity & Conservation) 2021** as **Section 6.28(2)(e)** outlines:

The unique visual qualities of the foreshores and Waterways Area and its islands, foreshores and tributaries will be enhanced, protected or maintained, including views and vistas to and from-

- (i) The Foreshores and Waterways Area and
- (ii) Public places, landmarks and heritage items.

6.28 outlines:

- (i) Sydney Harbour is a public resource, owned by the public, to be protected for the public good,
- (ii) the public good has precedence over the private good,
- (iii) the protection of the natural assets of Sydney Harbour has precedence over all other interest,

Table 1: Statutory Heritage Listings of the Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI), fails to recognise a number of listed heritage items within the vicinity of Woolwich Marina that contribute to this extraordinary heritage precinct.

The SoHI mentions local heritage item I93 Clarkes Point Reserve but fails to recognise the substantial heritage significance of this reserve as the site of the Atlas Engineering Slipways, the site of the Atlas Foundry and the site of 'Viewforth', a house built and lived in by members of the Clarke family and later used by Atlas Engineering as its works office.



Photograph of Viewforth (c 1897), a house built and lived in by members of the Clarke family and later used by Atlas Engineering as its Works Office.

Although the Atlas Engineering Slipways are not recognised as a heritage item in their own right, they are a vitally important relic within local heritage item I93 Clarkes Point Reserve. An extraordinary number of significant vessels, including a number of Manly Ferries, were built on these slipways from the 1890s to the Second World War.



The remains of the Atlas Engineering Slipways in the foreground with the existing Woolwich Marina in the background to the west.

By its own admission at **P. 40, 5 [1.4]**, the SoHI does not provide a detailed history of the site nor a full assessment of significance to Heritage NSW standards but only provides a brief history of the site and makes reference to, without endorsing, the inadequate Statement of Heritage Impact prepared by Advisian (9 May 2023).

Under **Part 5.10 (5)** of the *Hunters Hill LEP 2012*, the 'consent authority may, before granting consent to any development ... on land that is within the vicinity of' ... 'land on which a heritage item is located, or ... land that is within a heritage conservation area',

require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.

Without logical explanation at **P. 28 [4.2]**, the SoHI arbitrarily excludes a number of heritage items, greater than 100 metres away, from consideration as not being 'in the vicinity'.

The *Hunters Hill LEP*, and indeed the standard instrument which it follows, do not define the vicinity. However, as is the case with this proposal, where the proposed development is in or adjacent to a Heritage Conservation Area and surrounded by an extraordinary precinct that includes about 20 heritage items, some of State, Commonwealth or World significance, then 'the vicinity' in which impacts are considered should be far broader than a mere 100metres.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Trust is reflecting community concern. This part of Sydney Harbour must not be allowed to become victim to unnecessary overdevelopment and privatisation of the waterways for a privileged few.

The site for Marina expansion is totally incompatible with its heritage surrounds and natural environment, especially given the need for westward development, the only option available perhaps to accommodate a doubling of expansion targets. This will result in a wall of boats berthed only metres away alongside state heritage listed Kelly's Bush and Kelly's Bush Park, severely impacting all current views for all recreational visitors and users, hikers, walkers and kayakers and the public at large. Walking westward along the foreshore pathway of The Horse Paddock will also be severely impacted.

Such a high level of impact has seemingly been **down played, deliberately ignored or distorted** with photos and wording that clearly seeks to **minimise intrusions and damage** to the fabric of this beautiful parkland area on Sydney Harbour.

Of great importance will be the loss of views and sight lines to other important heritage items (Cockatoo, Spectacle and Snapper Islands). Once it's gone, it is gone forever.

We hope common sense prevails and legislation protections are applied to ensure this heritage precinct and its heritage significance and values survive and are maintained, so future generations of Australians will inherit and enjoy 'Moocooboola', a meeting of the waters on Sydney Harbour.



Annette Gallard
President
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