

## **Summary of public submissions for DA 22/5178 (PAN-209409) – Installation of Digital Advertising Signage– Darcy Street Railway Overpass, Parramatta**

### **SUB-2574/74 (11/05/22)**

Uploaded as a duplicate.

### **SUB-2574/75 (11/05/22)**

Please provide your view on the application

I object to it

#### Submission

Submission and comments as per attached document.

#### Document Details

**28 June 2022**

### **DARCY STREET, PARRAMATTA RAIL OVERPASS SIGNAGE – DA 22/5178**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the current Development Application (DA), DA 22/5178, concerning the Darcy Street Rail Overpass, in Parramatta (the site). We note that the DA seeks development consent for the “Installation of two new digital advertising signs on the northern and southern elevations of the Darcy Street Rail Overpass (facing Church Street), Parramatta.” We have reviewed the application package and wish to make the following comments. We would also be more than happy to discuss our comments and recommendations with you, where required.

#### About Scentre Group

Scentre Group was created in June 2014 through the merger of the Westfield Retail Trust and the Westfield Group’s Australian and New Zealand management business. Scentre Group owns and operates a high-quality portfolio of 42 Living Centres with retail assets under management valued at \$50.4 billion.

Our Living Centres operate under the Westfield brand and are an essential part of the

community's social and economic fabric. In 2019, over 548 million customers visited a Westfield Living Centre, spending \$25 billion across the Australian and New Zealand Portfolio.

Within NSW, there are 15 Westfield Living Centres positioned within strategic centres. This includes the Westfield Parramatta asset which is located directly opposite the rail overpass where the DA proposal is situated. We take a keen interest in adjacent planning applications and developments, given we are seeking to progressively transform and evolve our Living Centres into high-quality mixed-use precincts and Living Destinations.

### Key Issues

Scentre Group generally supports the opportunity for CBD locations to accommodate digital advertising and recognises that this form of advertising can assist retailers, many of which we accommodate within our Living Centres.

However, Scentre Group objects to this proposal in its current form, as we feel that the design of the proposed signage does not promote high quality urban design outcomes and good design principles, which ultimately serves to benefit the amenity of the streetscape and locality.

It is considered that the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) should encourage a better urban design outcome for any proposed signage with the overlay to promote a meaningful placemaking opportunity at this prominent intersection. The following sections of this letter provide the reasoning for the objection to the proposal in its current form.

### Impact on Main Intersection within the Parramatta CBD

Darcy Street, Church Street and Argyle Street are all prominent thoroughfares for the Parramatta CBD, and accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, in the proximity of the Parramatta Railway Station. As such, this location is a key intersection within the CBD, and forms a linkage to the new Parramatta Square, which is a \$2.8 billion project involving six new buildings, a refurbished Town Hall and extensive community space. Parramatta Square and the streets surrounding it is evolving into an important gathering space and transit areas for the many people who live, work and visit the Parramatta CBD.

This highly trafficked location presents a distinctive opportunity to improve and enhance the

public realm and overall streetscape, in circumstances where the current environment is relatively utilitarian and unappealing.

However, the proposed signage fails to take this placemaking opportunity, as it simply seeks to attach two new advertising signs on support structures attached to the rail overpass, without consideration of how this could be better integrated into its surroundings, to enhance the visual appearance of the overpass. Furthermore, the northern sign (as per the Image 1 below) appears to be overly engineered and positioned at an angle such that it faces Church Street, which results in a rather incongruous looking structure that is 'bolted' onto the existing bridge.

It is considered that as currently proposed, the signage adversely impacts the streetscape, in a situation where there is significant investment within the locality to enhance the local environment at Parramatta Square, along with the investment proposed by Scentre Group to improve and activate the ground plane outside the Westfield Parramatta Living Centre.



*Image 1 – Proposed North Signage*

*Source: Keylan Consulting Pty Ltd SEE*

## Inconsistency with Planning Policies

The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021* (Industry and Employment SEPP) and *Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011* (Parramatta DCP) provide detailed requirements for signage in both NSW and Parramatta.

The Industry and Employment SEPP aims to ensure that advertising and signage is well located, compatible with the desired amenity of an area and of high quality. Clause 3.6 requires the consent authority to assess the proposal against a range of criteria contained within Schedule 5 of the SEPP.

Under Criteria 4 of this Schedule, the consent authority must consider whether the proposal meets the following points:

*Is the scale, proportion, and form of the proposal appropriate for the streetscape, setting or landscape?*

- *Does the proposal contribute to the visual interest of the streetscape, setting or landscape?*

We consider that the current proposal fails both above criteria, insofar as the form of the development is not appropriate for a streetscape that is in the process of being enhanced, and the proposal adversely impacts the visual interest of the current setting, by introducing these poorly designed signs.

The Parramatta DCP contains the following objectives within Section 5.5 in relation to signage, such that proposal should:

- *Contributes to the appearance of the building, structure, or place by encouraging coordinated signage of high-quality design and materials.*
- *To protect the significant characteristics of buildings, streetscapes, vistas, and the Parramatta CBD skyline.*

Again, we consider that the proposal does not fully align with the above policies, given the limited quality of the signage and the resultant impact on the visual amenity of the immediate streetscape arising from the proposal.

### Recommendation

As indicated above, Scentre Group do not object to the principle of advertising signage at this location, however it is considered that the design of the signage could be improved and better integrated into the existing bridge structure. This would help to enhance the overall appearance of this key intersection within the CBD, advance a more holistic and considered urban design outcome and align with the streetscape enhancement works which are proposed and being undertaken within the immediate environment.

A potential design solution could see the new signage mounted within a form of framing or artwork structure, which would help to improve the visual appearance of the proposal and in turn assist with enhancing the aesthetic quality of the local streetscape.

*Recommendation: It is recommended that the applicant considers an improved design solution for the proposed signage which serves to better integrate the elements of structure into the streetscape and provides an enhanced urban design outcome.\*

### Summary

In summary, Scentre Group requests that DPE and the Applicant should explore alternate design options for the sign at this location. Scentre Group believe the signage could be designed to better integrate with the bridge to provide an improved streetscape and visual appearance as well as deliver a more considered and enhanced urban design and placemaking outcome.

We would be happy to discuss further with DPE, Council or the Applicant on any of the matters raised in this submission or on ways we can work together to achieve a more desired outcome.