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Mr Daniel Brook  
Manager Commercial Transactions  
Government Property NSW  
Level 5, 4-6 Bligh Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Daniel,

## **MOONEY MOONEY HERITAGE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

I refer to the Mooney Mooney Concept plans, including the proposed Zoning and Masterplan, dated July 2016. These plans have been informed by the Heritage Assessment prepared by Urbis in 2014, which forms part of this submission.

The 2014 Heritage Assessment will need to be reviewed in a future detailed Development Application for the site and be replaced by a Conservation Management Plan (CMP).

I acknowledge the iterative process between the consultants and Government Property NSW and make the following comments.

### **Tourism and Residential Uses**

The current site is generally derelict and has been inaccessible for many years. The site was closed to the general public through its lifetime and this concept plan provides the opportunity to both provide accessibility and interpretation of its former use. The opportunity for tourism use is particularly welcome as it allows for controlled access to the island and for appropriate associated uses on the mainland. The designated uses have been sited and determined by a number of factors, including the view analysis, which provide an appropriate setting for the heritage attributes of the area.

### **Peat Island**

The four principal buildings on the site designed by the Government Architect's Office from 1903 to 1909, under the then Government Architect Walter Liberty Vernon, are retained in the plan. These Vernon buildings, known as the Administration Building, Denby, Pines and Sea Breeze, must be retained and adapted as part of the future use of the island. The buildings are in poor condition and have been subject to unsympathetic alterations and additions. The later additions to these buildings may be removed and this will provide an opportunity for new additions and adjacent structures to complement their heritage significance. The adaptation of these buildings for new uses is encouraged. The detailed policies for these buildings should be accommodated in a future CMP.

There are a number of other buildings on the island of potential High and Moderate significance that may be able to be conserved in association with new uses however the condition of the buildings and the amount of change would require additional investigation to establish the economic viability of these buildings. Virtually all of these buildings have been encased in later structures or/and have had their interiors stripped out for changing uses.

A new building is indicated in the concept plan between the Pines and Sea Breeze and this is considered to be a suitable place for a future accommodation building. The design of this building, as with other future buildings on the island, will be subject to a future urban design analysis.

The island has a history of development from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to more recent times and the opportunity exists to replace most of this development with new buildings which will support the ongoing conservation of the Vernon buildings and provide a focus for the use and interpretation of the island and its potential use for tourism purposes.

Not all potential development is included in the Concept Plan however that does not preclude new appropriate development to the north and south of the principal buildings. Tourist uses on the island may be accommodated and these include restaurants, café's, visitor accommodation, recreation facilities (tennis courts, kayak hire) camping grounds and conference type facilities. Many of these uses have been successful in heritage situations such as Cockatoo Island. With the opportunity to demolish less significant buildings comes an opportunity to build more generous accommodation facilities to support conservation and these should be judged by design excellence. Higher buildings than currently exist are possible in this regard without diminishing an appreciation of the Vernon buildings.

The island has a number of identified significant trees and these have been mapped. They will be protected and be subject to a landscape management plan in future development scenarios.

**The Causeway** was constructed in the 1950's and has social connections to the patients and staff involved in its construction. Although of High Significance it may be altered in some form to assist in the revitalisation of the island and the adjacent waterway for recreation purposes. Questions relating to an opening for water flow, for example, may be addressed in the CMP however the opportunity exists to make changes to this structure whilst maintaining its presence in a meaningful manner.

### **West of Expressway**

The land based development provides for residential, both low and medium, and for uses associated with water recreation, including the marina. Most of the buildings in this sector are neutral or intrusive in nature however there are three buildings which have a moderate significance and these may be able to be recorded and removed as their condition is poor and the locations are such that the economic support of the highly significant items on the island will be supported by the overall concept plan.

The dairy buildings were constructed in the early 1940's and the use ceased in the late 1960's, hence their poor condition. The manner in which the site worked in terms of its sustainability is an important aspect of a future site interpretation strategy.

The cottage to the north of this area, known as the sewing room, appears to have been a relocated building. Further investigation is required to determine whether it is of such rarity that will require further relocation and reuse.

The aboriginal heritage on the site is the subject of a separate report.

### **East of Expressway**

There is only one building considered to be of such significance that it warrants attention. Virtually all buildings are considered to be neutral or intrusive in nature except for the Chapel, which is considered to be of Moderate Significance. Whilst being aesthetically eccentric for its 1960's construction it provides a social link to the community and has an associative presence in the area. Further investigation of the building from a community perspective may alter this grading, either up or down.



There is also a dilapidated school building that requires further investigation on the disused school site.

### **Conclusion**

Peat Island, including its principal buildings, is a place of high heritage significance. The significance levels for the overall site are to be detailed in a future CMP and any statutory listing should await a final determination of this report.

The subject concept plan, zoning plan and master plan, provide for the conservation and re-use of the significant items on the island and the land based places associated with its development.

The significance of the site has been diminished in physical terms over time and the buildings have mostly been subject to ad-hoc change by successive administrations. The opportunity may exist to conserve more than the four principal buildings however this will require further examination based on integrity, condition and financial feasibility. The island and the broader site require the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan to provide for the future management of the place.

In principle the proposed concepts for the overall site are a positive initiative for heritage, allow for appropriate complementary uses and are supported as the identified heritage significance of the place is able to be conserved through the adaptation of existing identified buildings and the introduction of the appropriate new uses as proposed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Davies".

Stephen Davies  
Director