

Annexure 3

2 May 2019

REFERRAL RESPONSE - HERITAGE

FILE NO: Development Applications/ 438/2015/2

ADDRESS: 30 Alma Street PADDINGTON 2021

PROPOSAL: Modifications to the approved stage 1 concept proposal which includes building envelopes, indicative uses, vehicle access and car parking and the heritage interpretation strategy

FROM: Flavia Scardamaglia - Heritage Officer

TO: Mr M Moratelli

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation provided by the applicant has been examined for this referral response:

- Drawing set by COTTEEPARKER, dated 20 December 2018, and numbered DA 0001 – 7004
- Heritage Impact Statement by Urbis, dated 19 December 2018
- Conservation Management Plan by Urbis, dated September 2015

SITE INSPECTION / RESEARCH

The following research was undertaken in the preparation of this assessment:

- The site was inspected on the 7 February 2019, including the interior and the general locality.

Review of the following documents and photographic evidence:

- Council's property system, to establish dates of earlier building and development applications for the subject and surrounding properties.
- Pre-DA minutes and previous referral responses.
 - White City Independent Heritage Referral (DA 438/2015)
- Council's photography files relevant to the immediate area
- Council's heritage inventory sheets
- Council's aerial photography and mapping database
- Google Maps – street view

STATUTORY AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

The following statutory and policy documents are relevant to the application:

- National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974
- Heritage Act 1977
- Woollahra LEP 2014
- Woollahra DCP 2015

SIGNIFICANCE OF SUBJECT PROPERTY/TO THE CONSERVATION AREA

<i>White City Tennis Centre is considered to possess cultural and heritage significance in view of their ability to demonstrate the following matters:</i>
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White City Tennis Centre

The White City tennis centre is a rare example of a sporting venue that became the focus of major Australian and international attention attracting world class tennis players, celebrities and large spectator crowds from around the world, including the 1954 Davis Cup unbroken world record of 25,578 spectators. It has continuously operated as a tennis centre since 1922 and is the largest open-air tennis centre in Sydney.

The White City tennis centre demonstrates the significant role played by tennis as a form of recreation, entertainment and competition in NSW and Australia. White City is associated with the development of tennis and the dominance of Australia as a tennis-playing nation on the world stage. Apart from the international tennis events such as the Davis Cup, the Australian and NSW Amateur and Open Championships have been played at the centre.

The two Centre Courts, the championship courts surrounded by grandstands at the south of the site, are of high historic and social significance as the core precinct of the tennis complex. The Centre Court space and its containment as an arena evoke a sense of occasion and are associated with memories of both victory and defeat. The Southern Stand is historically significant as the first to be constructed about the Centre Court in 1923 and for its association with the Lawn Tennis Association Presidents' and Ground Members' seats.

Apart from its association with international tennis competitions and contributions to Australia's international sporting image, the White City tennis centre is also held in high community esteem at the local level for its popularity as a community sporting and social facility.

Technical advances associated with White City include the first electric scoreboard in Australia, a portable machine built by club member Ted Booth for the 1952 NSW Championships. In 1957 the NSW titles were televised live for the first time anywhere in the country as television was just one year old in Australia. The tennis court surfaces, particularly the lawn and Rebound Ace Centre Courts, are representative of the better surfaces nationally and worldwide.

There has been a long association between the NSW Lawn tennis Association, now Tennis NSW, and White City Tennis Club who have jointly operated on the site since 1948, originally in separate clubhouses and between 1971-1999 jointly under the Northern Stand. Both have a long association with the history of tennis, which is encapsulated in the extensive collection of memorabilia held in the Australian Tennis Museum and by the White City Club.

The open storm-water channel that traverses the site is an arm of Sydney Water's Rushcutters Bay Stormwater Channel No. 84, one of the first of nine purpose built stormwater channels constructed in Sydney in the 1890s. The concrete channel follows the central axis of the La Crozia Valley allowing an understanding of the 18th century topography and the evolution from Glenmore Creek, to an open sewer and finally to the current stormwater channel.

The White City site demonstrates the development of Lower Paddington. Originally the land of the Aboriginal Eora people, the site was part of an 1817 grant to William Thomas, although the topography of the site made it unsuitable for settlement. The site came to be used for market gardening first by Europeans and then by Chinese market gardeners who cultivated the land and dominated the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to the region. The market gardens were replaced by the White City Amusement Park, 1913 -1917, from where the place's current name was gained.

The continuous green space and open recreational areas of White City and Lower Paddington are a landmark in the area. The site occupies the lowest ground within a broad shallow valley creating a sense of intimacy due to the enclosure by the surrounding hill-slopes. There are rare views and vistas from within and from outside the site that are unique in Paddington.

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Centre Courts

The Centre Courts have high cultural significance on a state level.

White City Centre Courts are of high historic and social significance as the core precinct of the tennis complex that is associated with the development of tennis in Australia and the dominance of Australia as a tennis-playing nation on the world stage.

The Centre Courts between 1920s-1999, provided the focus for numerous Australian and international tennis tournaments that attracted world class players and record crowds, including the 1954 Davis Cup unbroken world record of 25,578 spectators.

The Centre Courts arena is a unique area of the White City Tennis complex. It is held in high community esteem as the contained space evokes a sense of occasion and is associated with memories of victory and defeat of significant contests.

White City led the way in technical advances by laying a Rebound Ace synthetic surface at Centre Court in 1989. The competition grass court, a mixture of different varieties of couch grass, is a quality surface, expertly prepared and maintained.

White City Tennis Centre had the first portable electric scoreboard, now not extant, which was built by Ted Both in 1952 for the NSW championships. In 1957 the NSW titles were televised live for the first time in the country as television was just one year old in Australia.

Statements of Significance extracted from Urbis Heritage Impact Statement dated December 2018, p.24 and 28.

White City is identified as a 'Registered' site on the non-statutory Register of the National Estate (Place ID 101983, Place File No.1/12/041/0129). A Statement of Significance is available at http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;search=place_name%3Dwhite%2520city%3Bkeyword_PD%3Don%3Bkeyword_SS%3Don%3Bkeyword_PH%3Don%3Blatitude_1dir%3DS%3Blongitude_1dir%3DE%3Blongitude_2dir%3DE%3Blatitude_2dir%3DS%3Bin_region%3Dpart;place_id=101983 , which is copied below:

The White City tennis centre (opening in 1922 and operating continuously to the present), demonstrates the significant role played by tennis as a form of recreation, entertainment and competition in NSW and Australia. White City has hosted a range of national and international tennis events including the Davis Cup, Australian Open, and NSW Open Championships. It has served as a significant sporting venue over many years.

The White City tennis centre has historic significance for its contribution to the international perception of Australia as a world class sporting nation, through it serving as the venue for many international tennis events such as the Australian Open Championships and the Davis Cup.

The White City tennis centre is linked to the history of the game of Lawn Tennis and the New South Wales Lawn Tennis Association which established the White City tennis centre in 1922 and continues to occupy the site. The tennis centre has been utilised by the NSW Lawn Tennis Association (Tennis NSW) and the White City Club, which have a long association with the social history of tennis in the region and the state.

The Centre Court area and surrounding tennis courts have historic significance, having served as the arena for international and national tennis events of significance. The Centre Court area

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contains the championship grass court used at the pinnacle of Davis Cup popularity and a synthetic grass court. The southern grandstand, constructed in 1923, is still in existence today as part of the Centre Court area, and elements of the 1930s northern stand are still evident.

White City tennis centre has the first Electric Scoreboard which was built by Ted Booth in 1952 for the NSW championships. In 1957 the NSW titles were televised live for the first time anywhere in the country as television was just one year old in Australia.

The White City site demonstrates the evolution of Lower Paddington. The land was originally part of a grant given in 1817 to William Thomas, although the topography of the site made it unsuitable for settlement. The site came to be used for market gardening first by Europeans, and then by Chinese market gardeners who cultivated the land and dominated the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to the region. The market gardens were replaced by the White City Amusement Park, 1913 to 1917, from where the place's current name was gained.

The open storm water channel is evidence of the former drainage and former creek that ran through the site and is an identifiable early element of the site.

(Criterion A.4) (Australian Historic Themes: 8.1 Organising recreation: Playing and watching organised sports; 3.21 Entertaining for profit; 3.12 Feeding people: Developing sources of fresh local produce; 3.11 Altering the environment: Reclaiming land)

Through the years the place has been associated with many famous tennis players, both Australian and International (Criterion H.1).

The White City tennis centre is of social significance. The tennis centre is held in high regard within the tennis and wider community as the location of significant sporting/tennis championships, and as a prestigious sporting facility. The site is associated with many popular tennis players. The facilities provided by the White City site have brought together people from all over the State, the country and internationally to play both as amateurs and professionals. The Centre Courts and grandstands are viewed as significant by the community, being the arena where many have watched significant tennis games played (Criterion G.1).

The White City tennis courts are a rare example of a sporting venue in Australia where important events such as the Davis Cup were held. The Centre Court area has one of the few remaining natural grass courts in Australia which has the capacity to host a major competition (Criterion B.2).

The White City tennis courts make a major contribution to the distinctive aesthetic appearance of the Lower Paddington area with its large area of continuous green flat space that begins at Rushcutters Bay and merges together with the Weigall Sports Ground, White City tennis courts and Trumper Park. The site is surrounded by hill slopes rising away from a valley floor.

The White City tennis courts have retained a low lying green open space character which assists in the understanding of the history of the site and is aesthetically appealing.

The place is also of aesthetic significance because of the views available into and from the Centre. Significant vistas include those from the site to Paddington, taking in the Paddington 'amphitheatre' and from outside the site looking into and across it including those from New South Head Road, Alma Street, Nield Avenue, Glenmore Road, and Walker Avenue. (Criterion E.1).

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ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

Compliance with the relevant legislative framework and planning controls

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

A basic search conducted on AHIMS (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System) on 12 April 2019 from the Office of Environment & Heritage NSW (OEH) website has revealed that there are 0 recorded Aboriginal sites recorded within a 200m buffer in or near the above location.

The site is located within 200m of waterways, however the site comprises of disturbed terrain, with original vegetation completely cleared and being extensively disturbed by human activity. A Condition of Consent will be added to the recommendations below.

Heritage Act 1977

The subject site is not listed as a heritage item on the State Heritage Register (SHR). It was nominated for inclusion of the SHR, however its nomination lapsed.

The subject site does not contain heritage items listed on a Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register. The heritage listed Rushcutters Bay Stormwater Channel No.84 (4570660) lies outside of the subject area, as outlined in the curtilage plan by Sydney Water dated 30 May 2006 and available online on the Sydney Water website.

The subject site is not listed on the Woollahra LEP 2014 as an Archaeological Site, however due to the previous uses and occupation of the site, in the case that deposits remain, a condition of consent will be added to the recommendations below.

Woollahra LEP 2014 Part 5.10 Heritage Conservation

The subject site is not a heritage item in Woollahra Local Environment Plan 2014 'the LEP' but is within the Paddington heritage conservation area.

Listing White City as a heritage item on the Woollahra LEP 2014 has been considered by Council several times but it was never eventuated.

In May 2015, Paul Davies prepared a heritage assessment report on White City. The report recommended listing the site as a local item on the Woollahra LEP 2014, not supporting listing of separate elements of the site.

Clause 4.3B of the LEP contains exceptions to building heights for the White City Tennis Club, which will be assessed below.

(1) The objectives of this clause are as follows:

- (a) to retain views from Glenmore Road over certain land surrounding White City Tennis Club,*
- (b) to permit a greater maximum building height on part of that land, subject to certain criteria,*
- (c) to protect the visual privacy and amenity of nearby residences,*
- (d) to conserve and recognise the heritage significance of the existing centre courts.*

(2) Despite clause 4.3, the maximum height of a building on the land identified as "Area I" on the Height of Buildings Map is 11.5 metres if:

- (a) the building is located on the western side of the centre courts, and*
- (b) the consent authority is satisfied that the development does not affect view lines from Glenmore Road, and*
- (c) the building maintains the heritage significance of White City Tennis Club.*

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Significance of items in the vicinity

The following listed heritage items/heritage conservation areas are located in proximity of the site:

- ‘7 Canary Island Date Palms’ along Alma Street (No. 243)

There will be no adverse impact to the heritage significance of these trees deriving from the proposed development.

Woollahra DCP 2015

The subject site is within the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area, and is considered a contributory item and a significant item.

The White City 2007 is no longer in force. The Woollahra DCP 2015 came into force on 23 May 2015, however it does not contain any site specific controls for the White City site.

On 15 December 2014, Council resolved to prepare a site specific development controls plan for the White City site, but these controls have never been formally adopted. Therefore, the former White City DCP 2007 and the draft site specific DCP are not relevant considerations in the assessment of this development application.

The history of White City informs us that the area located to the south of Rushcutters Bay Park and near the northern boundary of Paddington to the east of the Edgecliff suburbs, auctioned as part of the 1900 Booth Estate, is a cultural landscape that has changed over time and evolved through several phases of developments associated with different land uses.

White City’s historical evolution spans from being market gardens prior to 1900s, to an amusement park in 1913, then recreational land in 1921 owned by the NSW Lawn Tennis Association and White City Club. The 1913 White City Amusement Park boundary (from which the site derives its name) originally spanned from New South Head Road to the north to Glenmore Road and Alma Street to the south. The land subject to this application has already been separated from its northern portion adjacent to New South Head Road and is wholly located to the south of the existing storm water channel.

White City’s original setting and curtilage has already been heavily affected by these boundary changes and building phases, with loss of fabric occurred during the land resumption for the construction of the eastern railway line and with buildings being erected/demolished and upgraded over time.

The local character of this cultural landscape resides in the open nature of the site, offering open views across Rushcutters Bay along the valley floor.

Among the earliest structures remaining there are:

- The Southern Grandstand which dates from 1923 and is associated with the NSW Lawn Tennis Club Association development of the site;
- Portions of the Northern Stand/Clubhouse building which were designed by Professor Leslie Wilkinson in the 1930s. This grandstand has been partially replaced by a modern structure in 1970s and the only remaining part of Wilkinson design is a row of arches.
- The Centre Courts which in the 1943 aerial (see Figure 1) had the same width as the southern grandstand, have been gradually reduced due to the construction of the eastern

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and western stand in the 1980s.



Figure 1: 1943 aerial of White City (Source: SixMaps)

Overall the proposal is an improvement from the approved scheme and it retains significant elements of this cultural landscape, for the following reasons:

- The Southern Stand is proposed to be retained and adaptively reused, with the overall form and street elevation of the stand being still appreciable from within the precinct and from Glenmore Road. While details of the proposed changes have not been detailed at this stage, the proposal is an improvement from the previous scheme due to the retention of built fabric;
- The area currently occupied by the Centre Courts will be built upon subject to heritage interpretation strategies aiming to retain the remembrance of such open enclosure, which has already been considerably reduced with the 1980s building of the western and eastern stands;
- The early structure of the Northern stand (Wilkinson's row of arches) will be retained and opened up to the north side. This will ensure appreciation of this early built fabric in views from the open valley floor looking south, which is an enhancement from the current layout;
- Some of the view corridors across the valley identified in the White City DCP 2007 will be affected in this proposal, such as views across the fields from Alma Street, which will be blocked by the Clubhouse. However, the reduced footprint and relocation of the clubhouse will enhance the approved scheme through the partial retention of those open views across the site.

Impact over the Paddington heritage conservation area can occur either through affecting the fabric and setting of near contributory items or through loss of public views. Overall, given the physical separation of this precinct from Paddington's contributory fabric and the topography of the site, impact on the setting of contributory items is considered negligible.

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The removal of an impermeable fence from Glenmore Road has been praised in the previous approval as a good outcome as it will give character to the Glenmore Road presentation of the grandstand, and this is still valid for this application. It is however critical that this interface with Glenmore Road is appropriately designed to enhance the visual presentation from the public realm.

Views across the open valley will still be retained when looking from west, east and New South Head Road. The siting of the new buildings to be as far back from the stormwater channel as possible to retain the open valley floor is considered a good design choice from a heritage perspective.

A detailed Heritage Interpretation Plans was conditioned as part of the previous application and it has not been submitted as part of this application, with documentation only including an overall strategy. It is recommended that this is reiterated with this modification and that the plan is prepared by specialist heritage consultants.

It is also critical that future stages of this project achieves design excellence articulating a high level of building modulation/articulation and a range of high quality materials and finishes.

CONCLUSION

Woollahra LEP 2014 Part 5.10 Clauses 1(a), 1(b), 4

- Clause 1(a) The development does conserve the heritage of Woollahra.
- Clause 1(b) The impact upon the heritage significance of the conservation area will be neutral from the approved plans.
- Clause 4 This referral constitutes an assessment under this clause.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The proposal is generally acceptable as it complies with the relevant statutory and policy documents and would have a satisfactory impact.

Consent, subject to conditions.

Standard Conditions

1. Future development application(s) shall demonstrate that the development achieves design excellence incorporating a high level of building modulation / articulation and a range of high quality materials and finishes. (B.2)
2. Future development application(s) shall demonstrate an appropriate interface with surrounding streets and public domain areas and provide an appropriate visual presentation to the streetscape. (B.3)
3. If unexpected archaeological deposits or Aboriginal objects are found during the works covered by this approval, work must cease in the affected area(s) and the Office of Environment & Heritage must be notified. Additional assessment and approval pursuant to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 may be required prior to works continuing in the affected area(s) based on the nature of the discovery.
4. The applicant must ensure that if unexpected archaeological deposits or relics are found during the works covered by this approval, work must cease in the affected area(s) and the Heritage Council of NSW must be notified. Additional assessment and approval pursuant to

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S139(4) or S140 of the NSW Heritage Act, 1977, may be required prior to works continuing in the affected area(s) based on the nature of the discovery.

5. The relevant Stage 2 development application shall incorporate a detailed Interpretation Plan **prepared by a qualified heritage consultant** that illustrates how information on the history and significance of the White City site will be provided. Interpretation by design should form an integral aspect of the plan, in addition to other devices such as display, web based interpretive media and public art. The Interpretation Plan shall provide details as to the type, location and spatial requirements of the interpretation, including for archaeological display (where required). The Interpretation Plan should be prepared by a Heritage Consultant and should be guided by a detailed Interpretation Strategy incorporating the interpretation strategy included in the Stage 1 development application.

This Interpretation Plan should have regard to the following more detailed strategies:

- History of early Aboriginal occupation needs to be clearly acknowledged during the interpretative process
- The audience of heritage interpretation, as required under the NSW Heritage Council's Heritage Interpretation Policy, needs to be clearly identified as to tailor the heritage interpretative initiatives and locations.
- Historical themes relevant to the site need to be clearly identified and addressed in the report.
- A selection of historical images of the site with detailed sources and references made available for interpretative purposes.
- It is important that Heritage Interpretation responds to 'Why and for whom is the White City important?' and covers all aspect of heritage significance.
- The Interpretation section of the CMP in particular Policy 23 and guidelines in section 9.11 and 9.13 should be included such as retention of the concrete stormwater channel as a visible expression of the Glenmore Creek, undertaken oral history and retention of NSTWA gates.
- A comprehensive historic research and heritage reports should be left accessible for visitors and researchers, either onsite or through accession into a publicly accessible library/local studies unit.
- Existing record of the current precinct layout should be recorded and made publicly accessible to researchers. This includes the undertaking of a photographic archival recording prior to the site redevelopment. (B.9)

Flavia Scardamaglia - Heritage Officer