

6 May 2021

Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment
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National Trust submission for the Draft Bays West Place Strategy

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) [The Trust] is the state's peak body for the identification, conservation and protection of built, cultural and natural heritage. We are a community-based organisation representing the interests of more than 22,000 individuals across NSW. The Trust has been advising, supporting and representing its members since 1945.

The Trust is pleased to make a submission regarding the Draft Bays West Place Strategy and thank DPIE for the extension granted to provide this submission.

We commend DPIE for including the protection and enhancement of the area's cultural heritage as a key focus of the Draft Place Strategy and the Trust is in full support of this approach. Cultural heritage is often sidelined in broad scale redevelopment and we are heartened to see the area's heritage protection and value thoroughly considered in the Draft Strategy.

White Bay Power Station

The Trust has long advocated for the protection, retention and sympathetic adaptive re-use of White Bay Power Station. We commend DPIE for including as "Big Move 1" the intent to "Repurpose White Bay Power Station to become a focal point of the precinct." The provision of a new Metro Station in the vicinity of the White Bay Power Station, far from being an excuse for its demolition, needs to be seen as the best opportunity for the renewal of the site since its closure. No longer able to be considered inaccessible and remote, White Bay will instead be more accessible than ever.

The Strategy should ensure that key views to and from the Power Station are identified and protected to ensure that this building can be a key historic focal point. The Trust are concerned that the Draft Strategy does not adequately address significant viewlines to, from and within the precinct. White Bay Power Station should always remain a prominent feature of the area and should not be dominated by other larger structures. We are concerned that the placement of the large residential tower at Johnston's Bay would significantly impact views to and from the Power Station, the silos and across to Balmain Peninsula. We are also concerned that the Draft strategy does not provide height and density details for towers or any of the development zones.

Glebe Island Bridge and broader networks

The National Trust do not support the duplication of Glebe Island Bridge. We strongly advocate that the best outcome for the bridge would be restoration and reuse as a pedestrian and cycle bridge, rather than restoration as an unused bridge. Just as the restored Pyrmont Bridge has become a key part of Sydney's bicycle and pedestrian network linking the city and Pyrmont, so too the Glebe Island Bridge can provide the key harbourside link in this location, from Balmain to both the renewed Blackwattle Bay and to the City generally.



We support the proposal to provide a world class harbour foreshore walk as a key part of the development, which would open the area to passive and active recreational use and create multiple opportunities for large scale heritage interpretation of the place to the public.

However we note that crucial need to integrate public transport access and pedestrian access via multiple entrance points if the precinct is to be a success. We bring attention to the Eveleigh Rail Workshops and the impact that underdeveloped and poor infrastructure links have had on the long-term viability and vibrancy of the place – a sad outcome for a significant site.

A coordinated approach

A key to successful planning is for the area to be considered as an integrated precinct. The Trust are concerned that should viewlines, density and heights not be outlined within the Draft place Strategy, the later stages of the individual precinct development will not result in a cohesive, sympathetic and well integrated overall area. The Place Strategy should avoid piecemeal development – an outcome that would be severely detrimental to the place, as we are seeing with the piecemeal development occurring in and around Sydney's Central Station.

We commend DPIE for preparing a Caring for Country framework however we feel that its approach and recommendations have not been adequately adopted through the Place Strategy, leaving indigenous culture and connections to country at risk of being sidelined in later stages of work. This needs to be a key element of such a coordinated approach.

Recommendations

Overall, the Trust are cautiously optimistic about the Strategy however we recommend that it be amended to include the following:

- Clearly stated commitment to retaining White Bay Power Station including the viewlines to and from the Power Station, and within the Precinct;
- Clearly stated commitment to retaining (and not blocking) clear viewlines to Balmain Peninsula, noting the western side of the peninsula is heritage listed and impact on this should be considered.
- Clear stated commitment to retaining and adaptively reusing the Glebe Island Bridge as a pedestrian and cycle Bridge.
- Clearly stated commitment to retaining the historic silos and the viewlines to and from them.
- Clear height and density requirements for the different precincts within the Place.
- Clear commitment to public investment into the conservation adaptive reuse and interpretation of the heritage elements within the Place.
- Removal of any proposal for high rise residential at the end of Johnston's Bay that will dominate the skyline and impact significant views to and from the Place.
- Provision of clear and explicit integration of the Connecting with Country Framework into the Draft Place Strategy

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) has long advocated for the protection and adaptive reuse of this area of Sydney and would celebrate the opening of these sites for public enjoyment. As a key stakeholder representing the interests of more than 22,000 community members, we look forward to more detailed consultation and engagement with DPIE regarding the Place Strategy.

Yours sincerely,

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