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Department of Planning and Environment &  
Sydney Olympic Park Authority  
Level 22, 320 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

*Via – electronic upload on DPE website*

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **SUBMISSION TO: SOP MASTERPLAN (2016 REVIEW) & AMENDMENTS TO SEPP (STATE SIGNIFICANT PRECINCTS) 2005 RE: 'SITE 50', 8 FIGTREE DRIVE**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan (2030) Review 2016. The letter is prepared by Urbis on behalf of our client, 8 Figtree Drive Pty Ltd.

Our client has a long term Leasehold interest in Site 50 (8 Figtree Drive) in the Central Precinct of the Olympic Park. In light of this, they take great interest in the Review given that it directly affects their site in which they have a future interest. Therefore, this letter provides a response to the public consultation process for consideration.

### **MASTER PLAN REVIEW**

We acknowledge that a significant amount of work has been undertaken as part of this Review. It aims to revisit and update the strategies in the planning documents associated with the Master Plan which we support. The aim is to ensure the framework remains current and relevant in order to provide a comprehensive approach to the future development of Sydney Olympic Park.

On behalf of our client, we support the wider vision and direction of the Master Plan update. This includes the future vision that Sydney Olympic Park is to be an active and energised town centre, which provides a comprehensive range of services that support residents and workers, and enables businesses to prosper.

These amendments are welcomed, in particular the revision to the future targets for the precincts which seeks an increase in residential development floor space from 575,000sqm to 855,000sqm, in order to promote new communities within the Olympic Park. This is alongside the broad range of complementary commercial, retail, recreational, institutional and venue uses, which together amounts to an overall increase of 460,000sqm of additional floor space beyond previous targets.

In addition, we wish to support the overall principle of increasing the height limits in appropriate locations and the Floor Space Ratio (FSR) on currently undeveloped sites across the Olympic Park,

which will help to stimulate further investment within the individual precincts in order to achieve the increased floor space targets.

## **SITE DETAILS& BACKGROUND**

Site 50 fronts Olympic Boulevard South in the Central Precinct is retained for residential/mixed use, and this is supported. It has an area of 11,147sqm. We acknowledge and support the proposed building height (149m) and FSR (6.5:1) & Bonus controls for the site.

The Local Infrastructure Contributions Framework Plan identifies the following designated mix of uses and areas for the site:

- Residential 68,701sqm
- Education 7,000sqm
- Retail 2,000sqm
- Community 2,000sqm

Our client has had an interest in the site for some time. Many years ago when the park was in its early development phase, the owners requested SOPA include provisions to facilitate the development of an educational facility on the site. The current site has some 7,000sqm of space designed for that use. Australia College of Physical Education (ACPE) occupied that space however is no longer leasing the space as they have re-leased space at 10 Parkview Drive, Sydney Olympic Park. The policy designation and use of this space is no longer relevant going forward, furthermore we consider that it is neither an appropriate nor commercially desirable use to occupy the premium space fronting the Boulevard.

## **VISION FOR THE SITE**

The client's vision for the site is to develop a truly integrated mixed use development that will have a defining presence in the central precinct skyline. The building will have a high level of amenity for its occupants as well as positively contributing to the public domain through well-considered design features and uses. The mixed use designation provides opportunities for the client to explore a wide array of future uses.

My client is supportive of the following planning principles and specific direction from the draft Master Plan review:

- The need to activate the street frontage.
- The urban form concept of podium building and tower above.
- Creating tall slender towers framing the Olympic Boulevard and creating a striking skyline to support the key north-south axes within Olympic Park.
- The creation of a wider green liner park on the Southern edge of the precinct.
- Nomination of a commercial core to avoid residential 'crowing out' existing and potential commercial uses.
- Inviting well-credentialed architects to participate in a design competition.

## COMMENTS & REQUESTED AMENDMENTS

The comments and considerations are raised for consideration to inform minor updates to the draft Master Plan, and the accompanying documents are finalised.

### 1. Land Use Flexibility

The Contributions Plan identifies the site to accommodate a mix of uses such as; residential, community, retail and educational. While our client has not undertaken detailed market research, they equally identify the need and potential for a mix of uses on the site.

It is not clear if the current land use and area designations from the Contributions Plan are purely a guide or in effect form a quasi-land use control layer for the site read in conjunction with the SEPP. Either way, our client believe that the notation of mixed commercial, residential, hotels, serviced apartments use is appropriate as identified in Figure 5.7 of the draft Master Plan. For the reasons outlined earlier, the clients desire to maintain space for education purposes no longer exists and thus regardless of the quantum of non-residential floorspace, we request flexibility to plan for the most appropriate use mix and not have prescriptive controls.

We seek clarification that this in fact is a guide and that the final proportion of non-residential floorspace would be born from a combination of the design excellence process together with market testing. It must be recognised that the draft plan expands the geographic extent of non-residential space and that imposing requirements in the absence of market demand creates poor design and street amenity outcomes.

For example, there is no clarity about the nature and timing of retail planning. It is understood that retail floorspace take up is likely to occur in a major block of 50,000-60,000sqm if a regional shopping centre is accommodated within the central precinct. That being the case, for a Site 50 which sits at the south-west edge, it casts some doubt about the viability given there would be no 'anchor' use to draw people down and beyond.

The current designations would equate to a non-residential floorspace component of about 1:1. If the land use proportion mix is desired to be applied as a control, we request the requirement have a minimum of 0.5:1 FSR of non-residential uses and allow the developer and the market to determine the ultimate proportion above the base minimum.

### 2. Podium Height

The draft scheme envisages an 8 storey podium form along the boulevard. Architects for our client have examined this and support our position that this amendment not be pursued. Instead, a greater degree of flexibility should be employed in the controls to allow for lower and more diverse scale of podium heights in the range of 5-8 storeys.

Our reasons are as follows:

- The current controls already allow flexibility enabling site planning to respond depending on individual factors.
- An 8 storey podium when incorporating the higher floor to ceiling heights (compared to residential) would stand as a very large building wall lining the boulevard. While the boulevard is a wide

space, the taller podium form weakens the 'human scale' feeling of the street which is important given the desired activation the Master Plan seeks. The highly uniform pattern of podium heights evenly spaced along the Olympic Boulevard street edge would create a streetscape character lacking the richness and diversity of forms that would make it a more interesting and engaging environment.

- Higher podium forms would cast a wider slowing moving shadow over public streets and spaces which has the potential to undermine solar access in non-summer months.
- An 8 storey podium form on a site of this size would include residential uses. Owing to the differing floorplate requirements of commercial/non-retail uses compared with residential, in practice it usually results in poorer quality apartments in the podium form.
- There is a prevailing podium height datum in the park of either 5-6 storeys for commercial buildings or 6-8 storeys for hotel buildings. There is urban design merit in maintaining a relatively consistent height datum.
- Finally, the site will have to go through a design competition process and that flexibility should be afforded during this process to establish the desired podium height having regard to commercial, urban context and amenity factors.

## SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Our client wishes to express its support to the proposed changes arising from the Master Plan review.

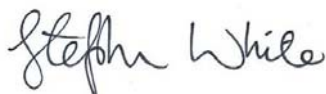
Overall it appears to represent a well-balanced plan for growth and facilitate development which is vital to continue on the positive steps made over the last 5 years.

We request that SOPA and DPE carefully consider our requests with respect to land use flexibility and podium height. We trust that these amendments can be accommodated within the next stage of the SOPA Masterplan and SEPP Amendments.

The project architect is preparing some high level design work that once complete, we will issue for review as it will supplement and support the matters raised in this letter.

I would of course be pleased to discuss this issue further and meet as necessary in order to clarify any questions. Please contact me on 87233 9955 or [swhte@urbis.com.au](mailto:swhte@urbis.com.au).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen White".

Stephen White  
Director - Planning