

07 July 2021  
Our Ref: 18-048

The General Manager  
Waverley Council  
55 Spring Street  
Bondi Junction NSW 2022

**Attention:** Emma Rogerson  
**CC:** Jaime Hogan

**Charing Square Planning Proposal**  
Design Consideration and Response

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Dear Emma,

As requested, the project team have reviewed the items included in the cover letter issue to Council accompanying the Gateway Determination. The comments and response prepared by Roberts Day/Hatch (project Urban Design Team) are included below. We trust these provide suitable clarification.

**Department Comment:** Widen the minimum dimension for the primary through site lane way between Carrington Road and Bronte Road to allow alfresco uses and greater pedestrian movement in the laneway.

**Our Response:** The Bronte Road property frontage owned by the Whitten Family is narrow (15m) and is addressed by the heritage facade retained as part of the Proposal. In responding to these influences, and testing-by-design the optimal relationship between a functional built form and laneway through the Proposal's concept evolution, the minimum dimension for the lane way was established.

At 3.3m the minimum lane way dimension has the desired future character of the small, intimate places advocated by internationally renowned place-makers. For example, Jan Gehl says: "Narrow streets and small spaces, we can see buildings, details and people around us in close range. There is much to assimilate, buildings and activities abound, and we experience them with great intensity. We perceive the scene as warm, personal and welcoming."

This minimum dimension is justified when benchmarked against best practice lane ways built and loved by people. Examples of lane ways with widths of approx. 3.3m include Melbourne's Central Place Lane, Christchurch's Stranger Lane, Sydney's Loftus Lane North, and Seattle's Chop House Row. When considered as a complete spatial experience or 'outdoor room', the minimum height-to-width ratio of 4.5:1 of the Proposal's lane ways is also justifiable when benchmarked against built examples. For example, Sydney's Ivy Lane has a ratio 11.6:1.

In particular, the minimum dimension does provide for adequate pedestrian movement and alfresco activity. For example, the City of Sydney identifies 1.5m clear as the minimum dimension for pedestrian movement and alfresco zones respectively. Clearly, the intensity of pedestrian foot traffic along the proposed lane ways will be significantly less than the City. The laneway width provides for these zones with an additional 300mm for landscape planters etc. The perceived alfresco activation of the lane ways will be amplified by highly transparent ground floor building design to blend indoor / outdoor activities.

Beyond functional operation, the minimum lane ways dimension also creates to a unique sequence of spatial experiences for people walking through Charing Cross. From the spatial openness of Bronte Road and Carrington Street, the lane ways create a spatial compression before releasing into the intimacy of the central plaza.

**Department Comment:** Widen lane way entry locations to improve legibility, activate edges and facilitate foot traffic.

**Our Response:** The Bronte Road lane way entry provides a unique and legible entry with people walking through the 'portal' being one ground floor bay of the retained heritage facade. Lighting and greenery will further illuminate the entry into the evening, whilst the potential for a super-sized mural on the wall of the Legion's Club will further entice people into the lane way. Given the Proposal's retention of the heritage facade and site influences outlined above, widening the lane way entry is neither necessary nor possible at Bronte Road.

The Carrington Road lane way entry is also a legible as it is clearly defined and announced by two separate buildings with corner elements and activated ground floors that elegantly turn the corner from Carrington Road and invite people into the lane way experience. As suggested in the Lumion animation accompanying the Proposal, other conceptual feature elements including a vertical green wall highlight the lane ways entry and entice people to enter.

As outlined above, both lane way entries benefit from active edges and have a clear pedestrian zone of at least 1.5m providing for adequate pedestrian movements.

**Department Comment:** Create direct visual sightlines, notably for the primary link between Carrington Road and Bronte Road, to improve safety and security.

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**Our Response:** Many of the world's most loved places are safe and secure, yet do not benefit from direct sightlines / connections. Instead, sightlines / connections are deliberately offset to focus people's experience onto a mid-point place / building, rather than flowing past the place. The internationally renowned Lexicon for the New Urbanism identifies this spatial typology as highly desirable, particularly for turbine squares (or plazas) where the points of entry are eccentrically placed. The mid-point buildings holding the square or plaza provide unique architectural opportunities with many doors and windows overlooking the square or plaza in each direction. Whilst also responding to site influences, the Proposal's concept to deliberately offset entries and sight lines to create a turbine plaza with positive spatial qualities is a time-proven precedent dating back to Camillo Sitte.

Whether entering from Bronte Road or Carrington Road, people's sightline will focus on the mid-point central plaza and mid-point buildings providing natural surveillance. A sense of safety and security will be enhanced by a range of other features including ground floor active uses, coordinated retail curation, lighting masterplan, and residential lobbies entered from the lane ways.

**Department Comment:** Consider opportunities to improve amenity to the lane ways and central courtyard, including solar access.

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**Comment:** Improving the amenity to the lane ways and central plaza has been a constant through the design process. As outlined above, the spatial qualities and experience of the lane ways has been based on world-best practice and empirical evidence.

Although a Planning Proposal, H&E Architects have prepared DA detail documentation to ensure the co-ordination and integration of the lane ways and their adjoining buildings is possible to realize the sense of vibrancy and dynamism envisaged by the vision.

The Proposal's Lumion animation also illustrates a suite of initiatives to improve the amenity of the lane ways including:

- Greenery including a central feature tree, vertical greenery, landscape planters and potted plants.
- Seating including fixed and moveable furniture providing end users with opportunity to personalize the place.
- Lighting including up-lights, down-lights and feature lighting on central feature tree.
- Public art installations including central sculpture and facade murals.

When benchmarked against successful lane way precedents, the solar amenity of the Proposal's public realm provides a similar level of performance with great sunshine in summer, good sunshine mid-season and some sunshine mid-winter. In our experience, the solar amenity standards of large public parks cannot apply to the creation of highly urbane lane ways.

The Proposal's commitment to use reflective facade materials within the lane ways to accentuate and reflect light will further improve amenity.

**Department Comment:** Consider opportunities to improve amenity to the lane ways and central courtyard, including solar access.

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The precinct is not current envisaged to be delivered in any set staging delivery but is intended to be led by development of the Whitten Land (223-227 Bronte Road and Bottle Shop) which includes the key connections from Bronte Road and Carrington Road and public square.

The structure of the proposed LEP controls as incentives, ensures Council have full control and determinative power to ensure that all aspects of the built form, massing, and open space, is provided in accordance with the agreed urban design frameworks, prior to determining any Development Application. This provide certainty of the outcome in any configuration of delivery

Provisions to be included in the DCP that requires any development application to demonstrate how the remainder of the precinct can be delivered in accordance with the planning controls.

We trust this information assists in progression the site-specific Development Controls Plan and Planning Proposal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Gouge', with a stylized, cursive script.

Stephen Gouge  
**Planning Manager Sydney**  
M: 0410 291 014  
[stephen.gouge@au.knightfrank.com](mailto:stephen.gouge@au.knightfrank.com)