

1st of April 2021

Mr Adrian Pilton
Chair Independent Planning
Commission NSW
Lvl 3, 201 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Melbourne
102 Chapel Street
St Kilda VIC 3182
T 03 9537 1822

Sydney
Level 5, 99 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000
T 02 9212 2255

Brisbane
Level 14, 100 Edward Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
T 07 3144 2600

hoyne.com.au

RE: Support for reviving 105-153 Miller Street

Dear Adrian Pilton,

At Hoyne we believe in projects that enhance the meaning of place. This is why I write to you in support of the great place outcomes I recognise in DA proposal 147/20 for 105-153 Miller Street. We believe that the new proposal will achieve more meaningful outcomes for the North Sydney community than from adding the MLC Building, North Sydney (former) to the State Heritage Register.

We recognise that when the MLC Building, North Sydney (MLC) was built in 1957 it was revolutionary in delivering positive public domain outcomes that were new to North Sydney. Many of these positive interventions have been lost over the past 63 years, from changes to the context and built form.

The proposed new building, designed by the same architecture firm who designed the 1957 form, can deliver on the original public domain intentions in a way that respects the history of the place, while applying learned lessons to deliver positive outcomes for 2021 and beyond.

We will explain below some ways in which DA proposal 147/20 can revive the positive intentions of the MLC, and why preservation of the existing building can not achieve the same outcomes.

The site sits at an extremely important junction, connecting the civic spine of North Sydney to entrances for North Sydney Train Station and the future Victoria Cross Metro. The existing public domain and built form on this site will not be able to cope with the estimated 25,000 additional commuters by 2036 that will stream through this site into the North Sydney CBD during daily peak hour.

The MLC was designed to be viewed in the round, not as an integrated part of the public domain, and the disadvantages of this are evident today. The sunken level of the MLC Miller Street retail colonnade disconnects it from being part of the pedestrian experience. Passing commuters have no option but to use the narrow Miller Street footpath, which is located on the edge of 5 lanes of traffic and interspersed with bus stops. The public is also isolated and disconnected by the 15 storey blank wall of the southern facade, which overshadows, overwhelms and does not actively engage with Brett Whiteley Plaza.

The new proposal addresses these issues, alongside meeting evolving public domain requirements. The new design works with, opens up to and extends Brett Whiteley Plaza to create 5,580 sqm of public domain for North Sydney, which is set to be the largest in the area. The naturally ventilated urban room adjoining the plaza will be the new living room for North Sydney locals and visitors to enjoy, and enviable to other areas as it is the most significant of its kind in Australia.

The Miller Street green space will be rejoined as a functional part of the streetscape, and the corrections to the levels and expansion of the public domain will greatly enhance the Miller Street experience. The permeability and relationship with the new market hall will provide much needed amenity for the area, the public will be invited to use the site as a multifaceted place, flexible for their needs.

Along Denison street the existing service entries that dominate public domain will be replaced by a new permeable ground plane, connecting the Victoria Cross Metro with a through site link. The generous public ground plane of the new proposal will revive the site as a truly special area and loved part of North Sydney.

In 1957 the Post-War Industrial construction of the MLC provided optimism to North Sydney. It was one of the first significant projects following World War II, and excitement was generated by the advances in technology displayed by the building. The Post-War Industrial style showed-off speedy construction methods and efficiency of materials. The design intention however was about modernity, not longevity, and the building has now reached the end of its intended functional lifespan. The deteriorating flat facade of the MLC no longer represents optimism; it is tired, and often misunderstood.

North Sydney deserves a new landmark that reflects its bright future. In a world impacted by COVID-19 we need now, more than ever, for our buildings to generate excitement in welcoming people back to our CBDs. The new proposal is sensitive to the concerns of today, with a focus on wellness at the core of the design, seen in the buildings naturally ventilated spaces, integrated greenery, social spaces, and serene sculpture garden.

The new building design also introduces a new series of firsts to generate excitement in North Sydney; it will be North Sydney's first Carbon Neutral Building, the first in Sydney with a unique vertical campus style. This is a truly 21st Century skyscraper in its design, which will be a proud addition to the North Sydney skyline.

The purpose of heritage is to preserve the story of a place, and we need to consider what is the best way to tell to future generations the story of advancement the MLC building brought to North Sydney. We believe it is strongest to capture this spirit of advancement through a new built form, one that cements the lessons of the MLC for the audience of today, and gives enjoyment to the public. We should consider that it is not in the public's best interest to have a building that is no longer delivering on its intentions stand in the way of a proposal that could enhance the meaning of the place.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Hoyne', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Hoyne
Principal
Hoyne