

ANDREW ANDERSONS AO  
A R C H I T E C T

Ms Dianne Leeson  
Independent Planning Commission  
201 Elizabeth St  
Sydney NSW 2000

1st December, 2018

Dear Dianne,

Re **Modification to Concept Approval MP 10 0198 MOD 2  
Channel 9 Site, 6 – 30 Artarmon Rd, Willoughby**

In September 2015 I was contacted by Platform Project services on behalf of the new owner of the Channel 9 site to investigate how improvements might be made to the approved scheme. There was a feeling that this scheme, which had been subject to numerous modifications during the approval process did not realise the opportunities offered by this unique 2.9ha site to achieve a development of outstanding merit.

Following examination of the documents relating to the earlier approval process and two extensive site inspections, I came to the conclusion that a fresh approach was necessary to obtain the best possible results. I felt this would be best achieved through an architectural competition for a new concept plan with a clear brief outlining urban design and place making objectives.

#### MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVES

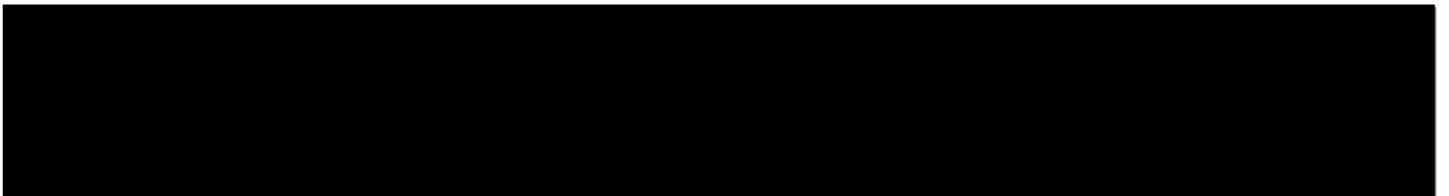
The site has unique topographical features connecting early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban development with the M2 Freeway on its southern boundary in a deep ravine. It is marked by the presence of the lofty TV transmission tower.

The architectural and spatial composition of the development of about 400 apartments presented the opportunity to create a strong sense of place enriching the image of this part of Sydney.

The creation of an attractive public realm through the generous provision of public open space should be an important theme in the character of the place and of benefit to the residents and neighbourhood alike.

The site presented opportunities for strong connections to green networks with Hallstrom Park and Flat Rock Gully and the dramatically sloping council reserve to the south of the site offered a clear case for regeneration and accessible pathways.

Overall on a site of this size it should be possible generate an architectural composition that steps away progressively from the domestic scale of the adjacent streets to taller buildings at the centre. Buildings should be richly articulated to achieve harmony with the surrounding built form and utilise setbacks to minimise the visual impact upon streets and public spaces.



### SHORTCOMINGS OF THE APPROVED SCHEME

The approved plan appears to have been driven by an intention to minimise impact upon adjacent properties. As a result, the scheme lacks a strong concept or sense of place. Other than the linear park along Artarmon Road, the open spaces are poorly connected and lacking in appeal.

There are only two building types: slab-like apartment buildings varying in height from 4 to 8 stories and two rows of repetitive terrace houses, 12 and 15 modules in length.

The floor plates of the masterplan exceed ADG guidelines in depth and lack sufficient perimeter for attractive apartment designs and a better outcome could be achieved by greater height for some sections of the development.

### ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

It was decided that the best way to ameliorate the problems of the existing approval was to hold an invited architectural competition by firms of outstanding track record in residential buildings. After an extensive survey a short list of five was selected:

BVN  
SJB  
COX  
FJMT  
CHROFI

All five firms have delivered numerous prize-winning projects. Extensive briefing sessions were held and there were mid-competition client reviews to clarify competition aims and respond to queries. All five proposals were illustrated by drawings, perspectives and block models.

### CHROFI WINNING SCHEME

At the end of the competition, three of the five schemes were considered excellent results but after detailed review, CHROFI was judged to be the winner for a number of reasons. They included an innovative street system through the creation of an extra "city block" linking the site with the adjacent street pattern, totally avoiding any perception of the development being a "gated community" and a small active public space lined with retail functions adjacent to Artarmon Road.

Most outstanding was the creation of an attractive "green" dominating the centre of the site and opening up views towards St Leonards to the south.

Clever assessment of the ground plane has enabled the creation of extra stories for building without additional overshadowing or inappropriate visual impact.

### DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Detailed involvement with specialist consultants has enabled the generation of attractive landscaping concepts providing a diverse array of public spaces and highly functional traffic and parking arrangements.

The architectural massing has been refined to enhance the transition in scale at Richmond Avenue and Artarmon Road and improved relationships with the Castlevale Development and properties in Walter Street.

The new pattern of streets and open spaces enhances the connection with surrounding precincts in strong contrast with the closed TV use in past decades. The conceptual design illustrates a rich variety of building types within a harmonious concept of materials palette and carefully considered scale relationships.

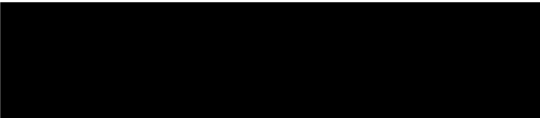
#### PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS

In 2016 I attended two public information sessions at which detailed drawings and models were displayed. While it must be said that a number of participants expressed concern about the lack of school, health and public transport infrastructure to cope with the intensification of development, almost without exception there was praise for the revised design. In discussion with some tens of respondents there was appreciation of the improvements to the quality of the public realm, connectivity and architectural character.

#### IN CONCLUSION

Over many decades I have had the privilege to be involved with a broad range of projects in Sydney that I believe have enriched the character of our city and made it a better place for residents and visitors alike. These include Forum Street St Leonards, Walsh Bay Redevelopment, East Circular Quay, Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf, Central Park and Pacific Bondi Beach.

I believe that the proposed scheme for the Channel 9 site will create a place of comparable quality, enriching the lives of residents, creating a sense of community and improving the quality of the surrounding neighbourhood.

  
Yours sincerely  
Andrew Andersons

*1.12.2018*

