



THE PADDINGTON SOCIETY Inc.
For Community and Heritage
Est 1964

20 July 2016

Mr. Gary James,
General Manager,
Woollahra Council
536 New South Head Road, Double Bay, 2028

Attention: Ms R Coull, Planning and Development

Dear Mr. James,

Alterations and Additions to Juniper Hall and Construction of Commercial Premises
DA 222/2016 - 248-250 Oxford Street, Paddington

Nature of the Development:

Juniper Hall, a Georgian villa built in 1825, is Paddington's oldest building, and one of the oldest houses in Australia.

The building and its site have been included on the Register of the National Estate since 1978, are together listed as a heritage item on the NSW State Heritage Register (Listing No. 00968), and are an item of local heritage significance within Woollahra Council's LEP Plan 2014.

The Paddington Society is a stakeholder in this proposal, both from the standpoint of a community organisation with a charter to protect heritage and amenity, and because of our long history of campaigning for the preservation and restoration of Juniper Hall.

The Paddington Society welcomes the revitalisation of this significant property, in particular:

- The conservation and restoration of Juniper Hall, in a landscaped setting, and its partial use as a residence;
- Construction of a new 2-storey Art Gallery at the rear which is both subservient to the main house and a modern contrast with it;
- Pedestrian activation of the North Courtyard, with a basement carpark below;
- Measures to better link the property to the public domain on Oxford Street, to improve pedestrian access from Underwood Street and Ormond Street, and to provide lift access throughout.

However, we have the following comments and concerns:

1. Interface with Oxford Street

The proposal for a basement level of retail under the South Garden with access off Oxford Street is unacceptable for several reasons:

- The cluttered interface at the street boundary with level changes, balustrades, steps, bridge link, security fencing, shopfronts and signage, will detract from the view of the Hall and its garden and from its sense of entry. The front heritage curtilage to Juniper Hall will be compromised;
 - Locating shops on this frontage seems to be a retrograde solution considering the 1980s public demonstrations which saw the demolition of existing street-level shops, and a stop to a proposal for an underground retail precinct, in this same location;
 - The sunken South Courtyard space in front of the retail will have low amenity as it is narrow, will be in shadow in winter, and will need to be fenced off for security;
 - The circulation route through the retail tenancies to Juniper Hall Basement is indirect with stairs down to the South Courtyard (2m below the street) then up to the Basement (600mm below the street level). Further, the retail floor to ceiling height of 2.85m is well under the Woollahra DCP 2015 (DCP) Clause D3.4 height of 3.6m, indicating that the South Courtyard needs to be excavated even further;
 - The South Garden above these spaces will effectively be a roof terrace, restricting plant species and requiring continuous irrigation, with very little contribution to deep soil, whereas 12% deep soil is required by DCP Clause C 1.4.8, Table 3. It is unlikely that large pine trees will survive in these conditions. Again, the front heritage curtilage to Juniper Hall will be compromised;

Instead, this interface is a great opportunity to create a civic space which addresses the Reservoir Gardens and Town Hall opposite, and adjacent Post Office, and also provides a grand entry to Juniper Hall.

This could be achieved by replacing the private, triangular sunken courtyard to Oxford Street with a paved public space at street level, with appropriate seating, trees, and lighting. Note that this part of the site has good winter solar access at street level.

Then, access from this plaza to the South Garden can be welcoming and direct to the garden, creating a calm, comfortable front curtilage to Juniper Hall.

The significance of the site deserves no less than this opportunity to enhance the public domain, particularly in light of the substantial financial contribution by the State Government, Woollahra Council and local residents to the restoration of Juniper Hall and its curtilage in 1984.

2. Proposed Uses of the Site

The extent of Gallery space proposed, both in the new building and in Juniper Hall, seems appropriate to the stated aim of creating a centre for arts and culture.

However, the addition of retail Tenancies 1 and 2 seems excessive, since it results in more than double new retail space compared to new gallery space on the site, and appears to be an over-development of the site. We note there are no details of fitout or services to any of the Tenancies, and no indication of the type of tenancies, making assessment difficult.

The use of the Roof Terrace as a sculpture garden is only acceptable if neighbours' amenity in regards to privacy and noise is protected, noting that some Ormond St neighbours have roof gardens that may be adversely impacted. The applicant needs to demonstrate the impact with detailed sections and plans. The hours of use of any Roof Terrace should be conditioned by Council, having regard to the adjoining residential terraces. Refer to DCP Clause C1.3.13, 04, and Clause C1.4.8, C12.

The use of upper floors of Juniper Hall as a residence is supported for heritage and security reasons.

3. Scale of the New Work on Underwood Street and Ormond Street

The Underwood Street façade of the Gallery at about 11m wide x 7m high, relieved only by a horizontal display window, does not relate to the terrace house scale of its context and will be overbearing in the street. Refer to DCP Clause C1.3.13, 03 and C1.3.13, C5.

The Ormond Street façade with its 2 bays is more successful at echoing the terrace house scale but appears too high in the streetscape, particularly when considered with the smaller scale of the terraces opposite. It is also higher than the upper verandah projection at No.7 Ormond Street, the highest building in the street, and will be some 12m above street level. We note that a reduction in height of this building would increase solar access to the proposed North Courtyard.

More details are required to assess the proposed Gallery roof element, for example, will it be visible from Ormond St? Will it block views out from Juniper Hall? What are the cladding materials? Is lift as well as stair access required? Will there be a store or WC?

4 Heritage

The following items detract from the heritage appreciation of Juniper Hall and should be deleted or changed:

- New stair at the rear north elevation of Juniper Hall should be deleted. The new stair on the Ormond St boundary should be sufficient for access to the North Courtyard from upper levels, leaving the Courtyard free of clutter and able to be occupied at its sunniest point;
- Roofed bridge link on a slope along the western boundary should be deleted as it detracts from the Ormond St view of Juniper Hall. A flat, unroofed bridge link could be acceptable;
- Summer house should be deleted as it distracts from the Oxford St view of Juniper Hall;
- Lift over-runs need to be contained below the roof – details are not shown.

5. Signage – refer to DCP clause E7.3.1

Signage for the site will be a significant element for the success of both the street interface and heritage appreciation. The signage light box on the corner of Oxford St and Ormond St is not supported as it adds to visual clutter and is not consistent with other signage in the streetscape.

The current signage indicated on the drawings appear unresolved, and should be the subject of a separate Development Application.

For this significant site it would be appropriate to co-ordinate street signage with that of the property opposite at Reservoir Gardens, with Smart Poles and simple interpretation plaques.

6. Consultation

We have received many expressions of concern from residents on both sides of Oxford Street. The submission lacks detail to fully inform the community, for example the scale of the Art Gallery in relation to its terrace house context, large sale sections through the site, the fit out and nature of retail tenancies, signage.

In view of the iconic nature of this landmark site in Paddington, and indeed in Sydney, the Paddington Society recommends that the development application be deferred and reconsidered.

Detailed drawings and a physical model of the development and its immediate surrounds should be displayed, preferably at Juniper Hall, for community comment before any Council determination.

Yours faithfully



Will Mrongovius,
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The Paddington Society

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