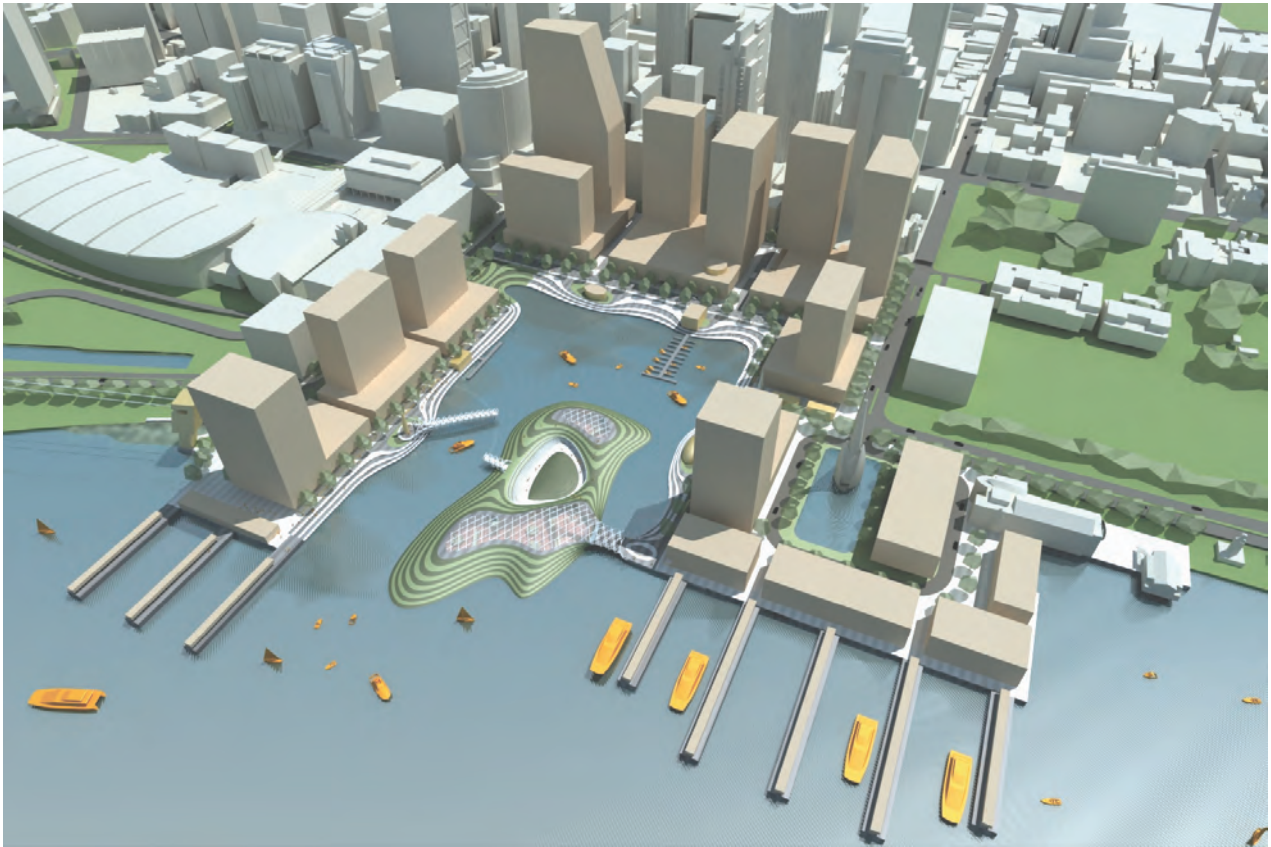
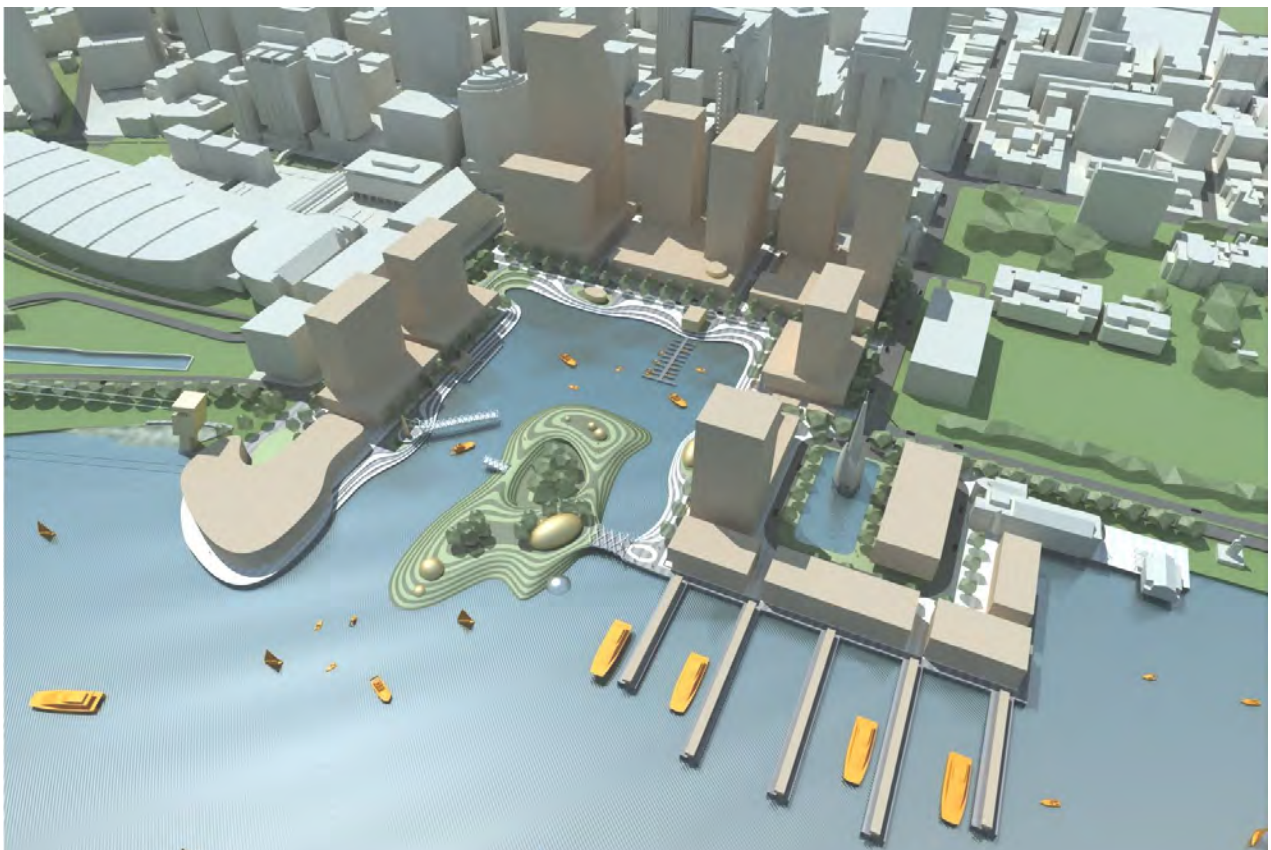


Perth Waterfront Peer Design Review 3

23rd October 2009



Reviewed scheme



Alternate scheme presented

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The members of the Peer Design Review 3 provided strong support for the revised Perth Waterfront concept. It was felt that the new proposal was a significant improvement on the previous option and was seen to positively address concerns enunciated in Peer Design Reviews 1 and 2 of the previous concept.

The group analysed the concept in the light of both the Government's Cabinet endorsed Project Objectives and the Key Principles and Findings of Peer Design Reviews 1 and 2.

The group concluded that the current plan fundamentally met both sets of parameters and that the proposed plan had no 'fatal flaws' in meeting these criteria.

In summary the group confirmed Key Findings across 5 categories of deliberation:

Structure and Integration

That the proposal successfully integrated with the current structure of the City.

Transport

That the proposal provided appropriate emphasis on pedestrian domain and appropriate resolution of vehicular movement and intermodal (land and water) public transport.

Public Realm

That the notion of a continuous, highly egalitarian public realm was an essential ingredient in the success of the project.

Built Form and Uses

That the city-like scale and intensity combined with a highly varied mixed use approach was supported.

Quality

That the success of the project was highly dependent on exemplar quality outcomes across all levels of design (urban, architectural, landscape and public realm).

The Group also provided some very positive suggestions and refinements with respect to key vistas, additional pedestrian connections, William Street western build-out, micro-climatic analysis, cyclist strategies and place management strategies. All of these refinements can be addressed within the spirit of the current plan.

It is also worth noting that whilst the Peer Design Review 3 was formally within the confines of the project areas (ie William Street east to Barrack Street west and north to the Esplanade) the group made repeated note of the significance of the project with respect to other elements of the City and surrounds. This included pedestrian connectivity to Kings Park, to the Cultural Centre, through the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre and to Supreme Court Gardens.

The Office of the Government Architect also acknowledges the significant input made by the participants towards the successful development of ideas and outcomes for this significant Western Australian project.



Steve Woodland
Government Architect of Western Australia

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

BACKGROUND

The Perth Waterfront Peer Design Review 3 was held on the 23rd October 2009 at the New Esplanade Hotel and was chaired by Steve Woodland, Western Australia's Government Architect.

This report has been produced by the Office of the Government Architect, at the request of Department of Planning, on behalf of the Perth Waterfront Taskforce. Department of Planning are to be commended for returning to the process of Peer Design Review and seeking involvement of high-calibre expertise in assessing the progress of the Waterfront scheme. This city-changing project is of extraordinary importance to Perth and input from the Peer Review Group is valuable in providing confidence and direction for the next stage of work by the consultants.

The Peer Review Group was comprised of stakeholders and invited urban design experts from Perth and Sydney. Most of those present also participated in Peer Design Reviews 1 and 2, held in July 2007 and May 2008 respectively. The participants were issued with documentation prior to the event that outlined the purpose of the Review, the project status and program, the new State Government position, an overview of the key features of the current scheme as well as some background material from previous peer reviews.

The objectives for Peer Review 3 were to:

- Consider the concept plan outcomes in context of the revised set of project objectives by the State Government.
- Review the concept plan in regards to the Key Principles identified in Peer Review 1 and 2.
- Suggest areas for further exploration by the project team.
- Consider methods and processes for ensuring high quality design outcomes into the future.

PROCESS

The format for the event comprised of introductions and background presentations from the project team followed by question time. Group analysis of the project was then undertaken before the findings of each table were presented. A synthesis of the key issues was presented back to the group by the Government Architect for confirmation prior to the conclusion of the event. It is this synthesis that forms the basis for the Key Findings of Perth Waterfront Peer Review 3.

KEY FINDINGS

Broadly, Peer Review 3:

STRUCTURE AND INTEGRATION

- Agreed that the current plan was successful in integrating the urban form of the proposed new development with that of the existing city and strongly supported the masterplan framework and geometry overall.
- Supported the Riverside Drive strategy to divert traffic around the development and *not* over or under the development.
- Acknowledged the importance of creating a double-sided, activated and urban street edge to William Street. It was suggested that the integration of the PCEC with William Street will be critical to reinforcing it as a major pedestrian axis within the city.
- Sought the integration and connectivity of the Supreme Court Gardens events space with the Waterfront project and suggested this be explored further in following design stages.
- Supported maintaining the view corridors through the project area to the water.
- Suggested that the pedestrian experience in Howard Street and Sherwood Court should inform the street design here.
- Confirmed that the William Street termination needs to be significant and should be strengthened.
- Agreed that the island was a critical design element of the scheme.

TRANSPORT

- Acknowledged that water/land modal transfer was important and agreed that the proposal for commuter ferries and limited numbers of private craft to dock within the water inlet and for charter/tourism boats to dock outside the water body was appropriate. A comment was raised regarding the need to understand the potential conflict between private boats and commuter movements in future project development work.
- Suggested removing the current access to the Bus Station off William Street to enhance pedestrian quality in this location.
- Generally took the view that low-speed recreational cyclists could be accommodated over the pedestrian bridge and that high-speed commuter bikes could utilise the street. The reviewers reiterated the importance of good street design to cater for cyclists, e.g.: New York City bike lanes.
- Confirmed that pedestrian movement should be provided for at-grade and that cars should be brought through a quality pedestrian environment. Ultimately the urban design should provide universal access through primary routes.
- Recognised the importance of cross site visitation between the Waterfront and Kings Park and supported the provision of a mechanical connection linking the two locations. However the nature, type, location should be further investigated.

PUBLIC REALM

- Emphasised that the quality of the public realm will be critical to the success of the masterplan and needs to be supported through appropriate early investment by Government.
- Agreed that the Island (irrespective of whether it contains the Indigenous Cultural Centre or not) was essential to the success of this proposal and encouraged Government to commit to implementing the Island in Stage 1 works.
- Strongly supported the approach of providing a continuous, linear public realm adjacent to the waters edge.
- Suggested that a management-led approach to creative place activation be instigated for this site, to ensure that Perth Waterfront assumed an important place in the physical and mental topography of the city and its people. The Charter for Federation Square is an example.
- Recommended that the great potential of the water inlet as a people-focussed location be emphasised so that the Waterfront was not conceived as simply a marina for boats.
- Encouraged development of a diverse range of opportunities to engage with the water (particularly over the water) in further design work. It was clarified that the various interactions with the water should be provided through a cohesive, and integrated approach to the public realm.
- Suggested that the public realm could offer historical interpretation opportunities addressing both Indigenous and European settlement.

KEY FINDINGS continued

- Emphasised the importance of overshadowing analysis in understanding the dynamics and chronology of light and shade, with respect to shaping the nature and character of the public realm within the project area.
- Identified the importance of street level animation and density of occupation, specifically in regard to the west-side of William Street and Barrack Square. It was considered important that spaces are deliberate and purposeful.
- Supported the 'pocket-park' proposal to the east-side of William Street.
- Supported the ceremonial quality of Riverside Drive, in particular the design of 'Riverside Boulevard' as critical to a new integrated connection with the water. It should not be a regular road.

BUILT FORM AND USES

- Unanimously supported the 'city-like' scale and intensity of development to the project area.
- Supported the notion of mixed-use but highlighted the need to prescribe activities for key sites, particularly if the uses are public or require specific financial incentives, for example hotels.
- Agreed that building massing and height will need to be driven by solar, wind, environmental and contextual analysis. The Group acknowledged that the masterplan framework was flexible enough to respond to this.
- Supported an open vista to the William Street axis but generally thought that it's termination needed an 'attractor'. It was considered important that the end of the William Street be marked with a public building/use.
- Strongly supported a diverse range of uses including short-stay accommodation and hotels in appropriate locations; and encouraged exploration of a greater diversity of uses, such as education, within the project area.
- Supported the inclusion of the Indigenous Cultural Centre in the project area and emphasised that the Centre should offer a multitude of experiences and be actively programmed to avoid it functioning solely as a tourist attraction. There were differing views in regards to the siting of the Centre.

ENSURING QUALITY

- Strongly expressed the view that public investment will be necessary to achieve the quality of outcome necessary to deliver environmental, social and long-term economic benefits to the community.
- Encouraged Government to take a leadership role and invest in the early stages of project delivery to improve the value of the surrounding development parcels i.e. implementation of the water inlet, island and promenade in Stage 1.
- Considered high-quality built form design standards fundamental to the ultimate success of the project. Land development and procurement methodologies must clearly articulate design expectations and put appropriate processes in place to deliver them.
- Articulated that high-quality architectural responses must be appropriate to location and vistas.
- Supported architectural competition mechanisms for design quality delivery.