

General Manager
North Sydney Council
PO Box 12
North Sydney NSW 2059



'Tusculum'
3 Manning Street
Potts Point NSW 2011
T +612 9246 4055
nsw@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

Australian Institute of Architects

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To the General Manager

Submission re: DA 347/19 – North Sydney Olympic Pool

On behalf of the Australian Institute of Architects, we are writing to object to DA 347/19 on the grounds that the implicit demolition of the current 25 metre pool building:

- disregards its considerable architectural value
- eliminates any possibility for its future contribution to North Sydney's and Sydney's architectural heritage and
- disrespects the exemplary design competition process that led to its construction.

Additionally, we object on the grounds that Council has failed in its obligation to effectively consult under moral rights legislation, and we are very concerned by the lack of environmental responsibility demonstrated by a plan to demolish and redevelop so recent and meritorious an addition to the pool complex.

This building and its associated facilities was completed in 2000 and was the result of a design competition conducted by North Sydney Council and endorsed by the Australian Institute of Architects. Convened by Graham Jahn, the jury was chaired by Richard Johnson and the competition won an award for its exemplary process. The new pool complex also itself won an Architecture Award in the prestigious Australian Institute of Architects New South Wales Awards Program.

As such, the process and outcome of this undertaking to upgrade North Sydney Pool represent outstanding achievements from which Council and the public would be expected to enjoy significant benefit with considerable longevity, far beyond 20 years. It is therefore greatly concerning that, although not clearly spelt out in the DA, the proposal involves complete demolition of the current 25 metre pool building.

The DA documentation states that:

The structure of the existing 20-year old facilities is displaying evidence of corrosion and dilapidation and does not meet current regulatory and performance requirements for a modern aquatic facility. Similarly, the pod and main support facilities are dilapidated and near the end of their useful life without major renovations. They will be upgraded and adapted in the new facility. The existing indoor 25m pool will be retained in its current size with the addition of a new ramp and stairs as required by NCC to provide modern accessibility requirements. It will continue to cater for mixed pool use including Learn to Swim (LTS) classes. A new warm water pool complete with accessible and non-accessible warm water spas will be added within the new upper level Pool Hall. It will cater to mixed pool use including Aqua-robics and Learn to Swim as well as recreational wading and swimming.



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No evidence concerning the state of the existing structure or any non-compliances is provided however, and it is clear from the description and drawings that the additional facilities proposed are able to be added as a separate element without the need to demolish the whole of the building.

During the design stages of the proposed development and despite a formal request, there has been no consultation or engagement with HASSELL as architects for the 25 metre pool complex, nor with Ken Maher as design director. HASSELL's only contact with the Council has been through a briefing from the current architects just prior to the submission of the development application.

We consider Council has not given adequate recognition to the architectural merit of the 2000 addition and has not effectively carried out its responsibility to respect its value, nor its obligation to effectively consult under the moral rights legislation.

Further, the proposed redevelopment will see significant embodied energy wastage result from demolition as well as considerable additional environmental costs associated with building the new structure. This is misaligned both with Council's sustainability focus generally and with the objectives of the Green Council Projects implemented at North Sydney Pool to date specifically.

This award-winning building should not be demolished.

Sincerely

Kathlyn Loseby FRAIA
NSW Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects

Cosignatories:

Helen Lochhead LFRAIA – National President, Australian Institute of Architects

Abbie Galvin FRAIA – Incoming Government Architect NSW

Angelo Candalepas LFRAIA – Director, Candalepas Associates

Paul Berkemeier LFRAIA – Principal, Paul Berkemeier Architect

Peter Mould LFRAIA

Ken Maher LFRAIA AO – HASSELL

Philip Thallis LFRAIA – Founding Principal, Hill Thalys Architecture + Urban Projects

Andrew Nimmo FRAIA – NSW Chapter Past President, Australian Institute of Architects

Tony Caro – Director, Tony Caro Architecture

Shaun Carter FRAIA – Principal, Carter Williamson Architects