

OPEN
IDEAS

ROYAL
ADELAIDE
HOSPITAL
SITE
DESIGN
COMPETITION

PROJECT
REFERENCE
GROUP
REPORT

Prepared by the Office for Design + Architecture SA

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Background

On 23 September 2013, Stage 2 of the Royal Adelaide Hospital Site International Design Competition was launched. At this time, the six short-listed teams were provided with a series of reports including the Jury Report, and the Public Submissions and Stakeholder Submission Synthesis (and accompanying full submissions).

These reports were also provided to the Project Reference Group (PRG). PRG members were asked for their feedback to help guide short-listed design teams through their analysis of the Public and Stakeholder Submissions - which was an additional competition criteria for Stage 2. The PRG comprised of 12 key stakeholders who provided relevant local context information to participating Stage 2 competitors. Membership included representatives from the following organisations:

Office for Design and Architecture SA (Chair)
Renewal SA
Maras Group
Adelaide Botanic Gardens
University of Adelaide
University of South Australia
Arts SA
SA Health
Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
Adelaide City Council
Economic Development Board
Adelaide Parklands Authority

Feedback was received from some PRG members, but not all, due to the tight time-frame between Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the competition. Additional comments received by PRG members were incorporated into feedback provided at the mid-competition review, in mid-October 2013.

Individual PRG members noted that the Botanic Gardens was concerned about too much development, while the Economic Development Board was concerned with too little. This report is intended to provide a summary of these broad views.

Comments to be considered by Design Teams

The PRG members were positive about the diligent handling of the design competition by the Jury, with no response providing a direct comment about any individual design. Rather comments focused on areas insufficiently addressed by all submissions at that stage of the competition, and how those deficiencies could be explored in the Stage 2 submissions.

The PRG supported the additional criteria for Stage 2 and asked teams to demonstrate their translation of stakeholder and community ideas. It was suggested that the teams might wish to also represent this graphically in their final submissions.

Of the specific concerns that were raised, there was consensus on the built form being sympathetic to the Park Lands and Botanic Gardens. It was felt that some schemes were more sensitive to the gardens, while other, more developed schemes, supported a stronger response to economic and commercial issues.

In the PRG review of the Existing Stakeholder Submissions there was notable support for the Art and Collection Display submissions, as well as the other Cultural Uses submissions. However, comments about the viability and funding of those submissions are addressed later in this report. Some PRG members were concerned about the submissions that recommended significantly reducing the built form on the site. The criticisms of these submissions were also primarily focused on ensuring that the trade and economic viability of the East End was maintained, as well as enabling the site to become a creative focus in Adelaide.

The key theme that emerged from PRG comments was in regard to economic sustainability and vitality. There was consistent mention from PRG members that an expected consequence of relocating the existing Royal Adelaide Hospital would have a significant economic impact on the East End of the City.

A number of PRG members focused on the importance of the RAH site including elements that can sustain economic activity, both for the site and in the East End. These responses suggested that the idea of revenue generation possibilities should be explored in the final submissions.

The economic viability comments did not

discount the idea of the designs that focused on largely clearing and landscaping the site, but suggested that future flexibility should be taken into consideration.

In regard to the fundability of designs, the PRG membership included a number of key government-funded stakeholders who were intimately acquainted with the current economic challenges for governments in Australia, and indeed around the world.

As such, it was suggested that the re-use of existing infrastructure should be seriously considered and that design teams should focus on the Design Brief criteria that outlined how designs could be staged. Staging of designs was a strong and consistent theme. It was suggested it could be done in such a way that an initial project could be underway, but not lock out future developments for public use when funding was available in future. This should take account of the existing and, at present, ongoing Health SA services still located in existing buildings such as SA Pathology and SA Dental properties. The Eleanor Harrald and Margaret Graham buildings are also expected to be used for health services until other plans can be made. The PRG wanted design teams to address the question of how designs may be funded.

There was comment from the PRG that the six short-listed designs did not meet all seven competition objectives. It was noted that, due to the breadth of the criteria, achieving more than 50% would be a challenge. However, it was requested that design teams clearly identify why they chose to focus on one criteria over another, and to take into account the additional criteria.

This request took into account the importance of mixed-use on the site. The comments regarding use were consistent in not replicating existing strategic uses already available in the city, but rather, creating an opportunity that would draw new visitors to the site. There was consistency about inviting new demographics such as tourists and young people. This latter idea brought up the suggestions of a high school, student housing, or a significant social/recreational facility such as a MOMA-like gallery or skate park. This was supported by the comments about developing a creative precinct on the site.

The connection and relationship with the broader context of the site, including North Terrace, the East End, the City and the broader regional context was raised. It was suggested that the North Terrace Master Plan should play a key role in developing the designs further.

Conclusion

The PRG asked design teams to be clear in their final Submission about the economics of their final designs, both in fundability and supporting the East End trade and economy. When addressing the additional criteria regarding public and stakeholder feedback, the PRG asked that teams take a thorough approach and potentially address this graphically as well as in the required text. Finally the PRG was clear about the need for design teams to utilise the local content requirement in Stage 2 to ensure final designs sat within the current cultural, historic, and social context of the City.



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