



### Joint submission to DA-2016/283

#### Alterations and additions to Haven Amphitheatre including stage replacement with a storeroom, accessible ramps and terrace and associated works.

From: Haven Amphitheatre Committee, Castlecrag Progress Association, Castlecrag Conservation Society, Willoughby Environmental Protection Association, The Friends of the Haven and adjacent neighbours David Shteinman (1 The Scarp) and Glen & Catriona Gulliver (15 The Barricade).

We are pleased that Willoughby City Council has lodged its DA for the reconstruction of the Haven Amphitheatre in Castlecrag for public comment. The above Castlecrag community groups and neighbours wish to respond to the DA with a joint submission.

We are mindful of the considerable work that has gone into this DA and note that the existing stage has been demolished. Only now, with the stage gone and with the height poles in place, have we been able to properly assess the proposed design.

The community places great value on the cultural heritage of the Haven. Our overarching goal is to see the Haven returned as a functional outdoor theatre and undercroft, as soon as is possible. At the same time, we wish to see a reduction in the proposed scope of the landscaping, access and terrace reconstruction activities so that the project's impact on the site and its cost can be minimized.

In particular, we would like to suggest the following changes to the DA:

1. Change the shape and orientation of the proposed stage to an elliptical shape. Such a stage should minimise the need for excavation on the eastern slope and would minimise the visual impact on the adjacent neighbours. It would also preserve the sight lines to the stage from both the western and northern terraces while retaining the amphitheatre nature of the site that has prevailed since the 1970s.
2. Reduce the ceiling height in the undercroft from 2.5 metres to 2.1 metres in accordance with BCA 3.8.2.2 (c) and, if possible, move the stage further down the creek. Given the size of the space and the extent of previous work on the water course, this might enable a significant lowering of the stage, closer to the level of the old stage, while retaining both adequate undercroft ceiling height and clearance to the watercourse.
3. Explore the possibility of providing an access ramp, for wheel chairs and carers, to the western (Barricade) terrace from the southwestern corner. This would not only avoid the impact of the proposed access ramp from The Scarp but also substantially reduce the total cost of the project.
4. If access from the Barricade is not possible, consider locating all three disabled spaces to the northern terrace. This would remove the need for an accessible pathway across the western terrace and for the proposed viewing platform at the southern end of the western terrace.
5. Do everything possible by way of design to preserve all the existing stone seating, not just the top rows of the western terrace. We believe that the lower parts of the western terrace are of great heritage value, both historical and cultural. The original seats were built in 1934 and although there appears to have been considerable work done on them in the 1970s, they form an integral part of the atmosphere and ambience of the place. Consequently, we do not wish the seats to be disturbed except as is necessary for safety reasons.
6. Ensure that as many as possible of the existing trees in the site be preserved and protected, not just the four trees identified in the Arborist's report.

In closing, we believe that all possible steps should be taken to minimise the impact of the project on the site so that as much as possible of the character and ambience of the old Haven Amphitheatre is preserved.

Regards

Dr Paul Stokes,

For and on behalf of the five community groups, and neighbours adjacent to the Haven.