

MACQUARIE POINT ADDENDUM

by Tim Biles

Comments on Neil Shephard and Goss Orbit Solutions reports to TPC.

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1 Overview

The focus of my comments are to the commentary by Mr Shephard dated 29 June 2025 and Mr Goss (Orbit Solutions) dated 20/06/25 in their written reports to the TPC hearing.

The key matters relate to;

- The visual impact of the stadium on the place that is Hobart. These comments are enlarged by the evidence of Mr Barry Murphy.
- The role of the Cenotaph and the failure of the proponents to have regard to the function and potential of this memorial.

2 Visual impact

2.1 Goss (Orbit) report

While the montages prepared by **Orbit** have widened the range of locations where the stadium is seen the principal failings are;

- The disregard for the views from the Cenotaph particularly to the south.
- The lack of montages showing the impact of the stadium on the Constitution Dock precinct.
- The nature of some montage locations that could have been chosen more judiciously.

In relation to the LVIA assessment by Mr Goss of how the stadium takes its place at Macquarie Point, and particularly the montage representation of the roof, remain a source of strong scepticism in my assessment.

Mr Murphy and Mr Saul will expand on these matters.

2.2 Shephard Report

Executive summary/findings

1.5 Key findings Neil Shephard

The proposed Stadium will be “unavoidably prominent”. Its bulk, height and scale are a direct result of its functionality. Notwithstanding that, it sits within an historically industrial setting and reflects many of the characteristics of the various uses, developments and materiality associated with the Site over time.

- The Stadium roof represents the element that will provide the greatest visual impact. The visual assessment indicates that it will reinforce the Cove Wall in Hunter Street and become part of the backdrop to the built fabric of the Cove, but has a significant impact on views to and from the Cenotaph. Whilst this will provide a new contributory element, the fundamental cultural significance of the Cenotaph should remain.

Tim Biles response

1. It is “unavoidably prominent” if built at Macquarie Pt. It is a ‘chair in a room’ and not ‘an environment in a city plan’ because alternatives have not been robustly explored.
Has an alternative site for such a land use been considered by Mr Shephard?
2. The stadium does not reflect former land uses in function or architecture or materiality. eg, ETFE? Extruded aluminium blades? Off-form concrete walls? Zincalume roofing elements?

The stadium roof does have a major impact and is aberrant in its form, mass and bulk. It sits as a large discordant object towering over the existing “cove wall”.

It recognises the “significant impact on views to and from”, but the stadium does not “contribute” to the Cenotaph. It detracts.

How does the cultural significance remain? What does “should” remain mean? Why not “will” remain? Are there doubts? Is there a caveat? What does Mr Shephard see as required to turn “should” into “will”?

Perceptions about the visual prominence of the building must be balanced against the desired role and functionality of the proposal in the chosen location.	This assertion starts from the premise that a proposal that has not been anticipated by any earlier planning document or control should be accepted because it is “desired” in a “chosen location”. There is no planning scheme support for this assertion. It lacks strategic thinking.
• In terms of visual and spatial impact the Stadium will be another new development in the ongoing evolution of the Cove and is particularly suited to the background location of the Site behind the ‘built wall’, where it will not dominate the finer grained traditional developments that are considered to characterise the Cove.	The conception of how structures should sit behind the ‘wall’ runs counter to advice from Gehl and counter to considered extensions to the Hobart city form and layout. Suitability to a “background location” tacitly admits it needs to be hidden. Unfortunately, it’s too big to hide. Because it can be read from some distance across Hobart it will be read from many quarters as a single material upper façade and vast, consistent material roof. It will overwhelm the “finer grained traditional developments” critical to the Cove’s and Hobart’s character.

6.12 Macquarie Point Strategic Framework and Masterplan 2015-2030

The MPDC prepared the Macquarie Point Strategic Framework and Masterplan 2015-2030 (**former masterplan**), along with a set of amendments to the *Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme 1997* (the **planning scheme**) in 2015. The former masterplan divided the Site into a grid typology of streets, building envelopes, and mixed use areas which promoted commercial uses on the ground level and residential above. In this sense it could be interpreted that the 'character of the Cove' was seen as being homogenous, and that the Site should be consistent with that perception. As stated earlier in my report, it is my opinion that such an approach is erroneous as it ignores not only the variety of use but also the typology of development of the Site since European settlement. In addition, the Site is hidden from views within the Cove, and any character previously or potentially imbued on the Site would have little effect on the traditional image and perceptions of the Cove between Hunter Street and Salamanca Place.

The site itself is hidden but the proposed building is NOT. This is objectively incorrect as the Saul montage from Davey/Argyle corner clearly demonstrates.

9.15 Accordingly I concur with the conclusion presented by the Planning Report that:

Whilst the Stadium represents a departure from the development envisaged within the Macquarie Point Reset Masterplan, the proposal and broader Precinct Plan adopt a range of similar urban design elements that directly respond to the values and characteristics of the Cove, including but not limited to:

- *Provision of activate frontages and new areas of 'primary' and 'secondary' space.*
- *Prioritisation of pedestrian movement and connectivity.*
- *A new building designed to be read and interpreted 'in the round'*
- *Retention of significant curtilage to identified buildings and places of cultural significance, which mitigates the perception of bulk and scale.*

(ibid. p103)

Because the use of the Stadium is an intermittent land use it will be difficult to establish 'active frontages' beyond events. The MCG and Adelaide Oval spend large amounts of each week as inert structures. The active frontages are extremely limited in space and have little passive surveillance value as a consequence.

It may prioritize pedestrians, but they will not be in attendance in large numbers if nothing is going on?

The circumference of the building as a walk is approximately 1 km which for most of the time there will be not much going on and what is going on will be invisible from the public realm because it is in a walled container that turns its back on the 'edge'

Saul's Tasman Hwy montage demonstrates there is little if any "mitigation" of bulk and scale, no matter the extent of "significant curtilage".

10.3 I concur with the Planning Report's assessment, notably that:

The dome-like roof form allows the stadium's outer edges to be lowered to a height that falls away in each direction, providing a considered response to adjoining/ adjacent buildings and landforms. This approach assists to reduce the apparent height of the building, whilst still achieving the functional height above the playing field (ibid. p117).

A significant consideration is that the building will always be viewed in perspective rather than 2-dimensional elevation. In other words, because of the curved façade and domed roof, the entirety of the building will not be visually appreciable. The interposition of landforms, other buildings, and vegetation will also mitigate the ability to view the entirety of the structure at one time. I agree that the generous curtilage will reinforce the concept of the Stadium sitting on the Cove Floor, whilst also allowing the relationship between the building's footprint and height to be appreciated as "proportionate and contextual" within the industrial setting (ibid. p118).

Saul's montage from Tasman Hwy indicates to the contrary:

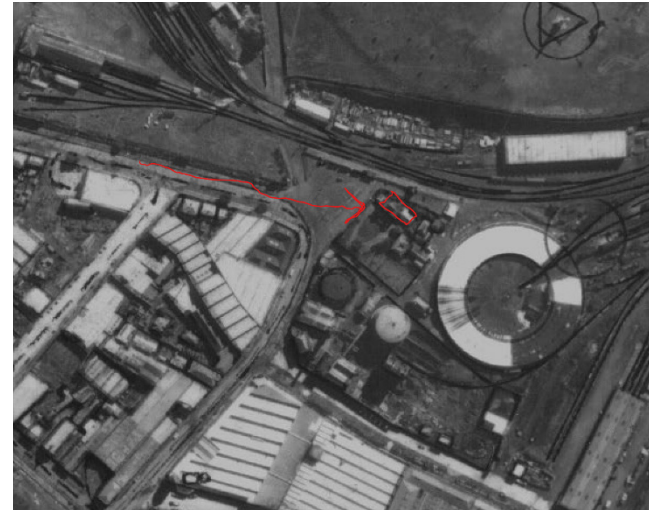


The "perspective" in the montage shows that the "curved façade" and "domed roof" do not diminish the visual impact.

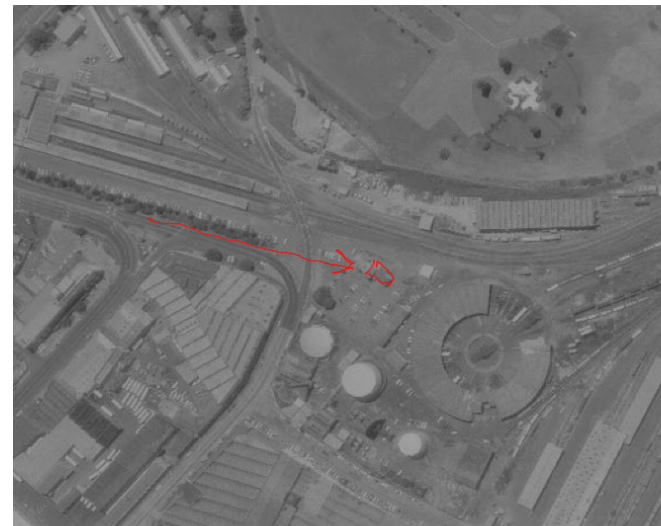
From a distance the form of the building will become more like an elevation particularly from the eastern shore.

10.9 From Brooker Avenue, the Stadium will provide a built mass as a solid backdrop to the Royal Engineers Building, although this will be mitigated to some extent by tree plantings/landscaping and the differential materiality of the Stadium. The montages provided in the VAE indicate that the lighter colouring of the Royal Engineers Building will highlight it against the more recessive darker shading of the Stadium, enabling them to be interpreted as 2 separate structures. Historically the Royal Engineers Building would have been viewed against a backdrop of larger industrial buildings, and at some periods included outbuildings and other structures amongst its immediate curtilage. The current relatively unencumbered background to the Royal Engineers Building is a product of recent clearing of the Railyards and the project Site and historically is not an enduring view.

The views below (from Purcell GJM) do NOT indicate a significant extent of buildings forming a “backdrop” to REB that in anyway equate to the proposed view from Brooker Avenue:



Part Fig 17: 1946 photo



Part Fig 19: 1977 photo



Part of Fig 20: 1985 photo

10.14 A roof is a fundamental requirement of the Stadium proposed in the PoSS. In order to fulfill that requirement a domed roof is considered the most suitable design.

3. A **thorough** review would question why this is a “fundamental” requirement.
4. What has not been said is that if the roof is removed the stadium will need light towers which in the case of the MCG are 85m.high. They would substantially impact on the Cenotaph’s unique vertical element in its setting and Hobart.

10.17 Landscape and Activation

I agree with the Planning Report's assessment that the proposed Stadium will be "unavoidably prominent" (ibid. p128). Its bulk, height and scale are a direct result of its functionality.

Notwithstanding that, it sits within an historically industrial setting and reflects many of the characteristics of the various uses, developments and materiality associated with the Site over time.

As outlined in the Stadium Design Description, the interface of the stadium with the external public realm ensures a fine-grained scale and multilayered experience, ensuring activation on both game and non-game days, human scale and sense of enclosure, leading to a sense of awe and scale on entering the stadium (ibid).

The hard and soft landscape elements will provide human scale elements, within the context of a large site and the feature built-form element (ibid. p127).

The visibility of the Stadium in terms of height will signify a clear direction for events, public gatherings, and the surrounding cultural spaces. As such, negative perceptions about the visual prominence of the building must be balanced against the desired role and functionality of the proposal in the chosen location.

It's only unavoidable because an alternative site is not being intelligently examined and considered.

These are activities that are past and gone. They are interesting but does a gasometer need to be celebrated here?

Where is this "fine grained scale" in any elevation of this building?

There is very little frontage (or leasable retail area) on any elevation that can provide activation, and the extent on non-game days will be even less. Activation is also about passive surveillance of which there is very little.

10.27 Siting

- *Relationship to The Domain and Cenotaph: The stadium's placement to the south-east of the Hobart Cenotaph and the Queen's Domain is a key aspect of its siting. ... this specific orientation means the stadium cannot cast a shadow over the Cenotaph or impact sunrise or sunset. The northern edge of the stadium precinct is intended to connect to the Queen's Domain, which includes the Cenotaph. The intent is to create a seamless flow and integrate the stadium into this broader green space, fostering a visual relationship that frames the Cenotaph and the Domain as part of a dynamic urban landscape, rather than a disconnected imposition (ibid. p366). While concerns have been raised regarding the stadium's visual relationship with the Cenotaph and Queen's Domain, a historical perspective unequivocally demonstrates that the visual context of this revered memorial has been one of continuous evolution, not static preservation (ibid. p367). Significant, large-scale transformations have continuously redefined the Cenotaph's visual and physical relationship with its surroundings (ibid.)*

The stadium is to the SOUTH of the Cenotaph. The view that establishes contemplation as Caroma has observed.

The Burj Kalifa could be located there and it STILL wouldn't cast a shadow on the Cenotaph!

The stadium precinct is not well connected to Queens Domain nor the Cenotaph – it's just next to it. There is nothing in the design that “connects” them nor honours them apart from the glimpse from inside the stadium that the proponents identify as important but which only serves to reinforce the total lack of appreciation of the current and potential role of the Cenotaph and the Domain that hosts the Soldiers Walk.

None of the “continuous evolution” has blocked the sweep of views that the stadium will obliterate.

10.44 KOP 11 - Victoria Dock Bridge



Figure 36: KOP 11 (source VAE)

This Northeasterly view shows the flat plane of the 'Cove Floor' and the built 'Cove Wall' of the Hunter Street buildings. The latter represent the 'traditional image' of the Cove, which along with Salamanca Place is commonly perceived as the 'traditional character'. The space behind these buildings is not readily perceived and does not contribute to that character.

The domed roof of the Stadium peaks over the roof-tops and with its different shape and materiality is clearly an element in the background, behind the built wall. It does not confuse or sully the imagery of the 'traditional character' in this view. Moreover, the scale of the Stadium is not perceptible from this viewpoint.

This "traditional image" of the Cove from only one point so close to the Henry Jones buildings that the roof of the stadium would only "peak" over their rooftops is a ruse and fails to acknowledge the journey through the Constitution Dock precinct that brings one to the iconic IXL Henry Jones collection of buildings.



3 Summary

My assessment is that the review in the Orbit and Shephard Reports fail to appreciate the role of the Cenotaph and its relationship with Macquarie Point in a manner that honours its place and function. Similarly, they fail to appreciate the manner in which the stadium as a structure does not fit the sense of place that is Hobart.

This failure leads them to the conclusion that the stadium is a beneficial addition to Hobart in this location. I do not share that conclusion for reasons set out in my reports of May 2025 and which is reinforced by the work of Mr Murphy and Mr Saul.

Tim Biles

7 July 2025

