

24 April 2025

The Hon. Paul Scully, MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Sent via: www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-planning-and-public-spaces

Dear Minister

**Concept Proposal: 45-53 Macleay Street, Potts Point 'The Chimes'
State Significant Development**

The concept proposal for The Chimes is a cynical attempt to use laws aimed at increasing housing affordability as a loophole to justify the removal of low-cost housing and housing supply for profit. I oppose the proposal and ask that you refuse it.

Housing Affordability

New South Wales is in a housing affordability crisis that all levels of government are working to address. The Government has introduced a range of reforms to boost housing supply, reduce the cost of homes and encourage the provision of affordable housing in developments.

The Chimes currently accommodates 80 one-bedroom and studio apartments, providing essential low-cost homes in an area that is close to transport, services and jobs. The proposed concept plan would demolish all 80 homes to construct a new building with only 34 homes, 25 of which would be luxury apartments and nine of which would be affordable housing for a minimum period of 15 years. The building's height would increase from 35 metres to 50.5 metres.

While the application claims that the number of dwellings is not relevant to a concept proposal, the number of dwellings is crucial to this determination because the proposal seeks to increase height and floor space ratio above what is permitted by the local environment plan in exchange for claimed housing affordability benefits.

The 25 market-priced luxury apartments proposed will not be affordable to the existing 80 plus residents of the Chimes, most first home buyers, essential workers or anyone on a low or medium income. Even the nine affordable homes will do little to improve affordability when considered in the context that they come at the expense of 80 low-cost homes and will likely be returned to the private market after 15 years.

Contrary to claims in the environmental impact statement, the proposal is inconsistent with the National Housing Accord, which aims to build 376,000 new well-located dwellings including approximately 15,800 social and affordable homes by 2029. The accord attempts to address an undersupply of housing while the concept proposal would *reduce* housing supply on a site by about 60 percent.

If housing affordability policies are applied in isolation and permitted to act at cross purposes, they will not help resolve the housing affordability crisis.

The concept proposal would result in a net loss of homes and a loss of low-cost housing purely for profit. The proposal does not justify the increases in height and floor space ratio.



Social Impact

The 'Housing for All: City of Sydney local housing strategy' represents the City's vision to build new homes in line with district targets in a way that meets the community's diverse and changing needs. The plan aims to continue to deliver a *mix* of housing, including studio and one-bedroom homes.

In Potts Point, 14.4 percent of homes are studio apartments and 48.4 percent are one-bedroom apartments, compared to 0.7 and 6.6 percent in New South Wales and 0.5 and 5.3 percent in Australia respectively. Displaced residents, many of whom live in lone person households, will have few housing options available, particularly close to jobs and services.

Over 60 percent of households in Potts Point are lone person compared to around 25 percent in New South Wales and Australia. Potts Point has historically supported lone person living and this has provided significant social benefits that have made the region lively. The proposal puts the social fabric of the region at risk.

The concept proposal would result in reduced housing diversity in the housing mix, making it more difficult to meet the diverse housing needs of the community into the future.

Height and Bulk

The proposed height and floor space ratio exceed those permissible in the City of Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012.

Photo montages from The Domain and Woolloomooloo show how out of place the increase in height will be and I am concerned the building will tower over adjacent heritage significant Victorian terraces.

Excess height will see many adjoining homes lose significant sunlight during winter of up to three and a half hours a day, significantly eroding local amenity and liveability for many neighbours.

The impacts of increased height and scale are unacceptable particularly when assessed in the context of the proposed loss in low-cost housing and the false claim that the project delivers affordable housing outcomes.

Heritage

Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay display a unique representation of Sydney's architectural styles from colonial times to the mid 20th Century. The mid 20th Century architecture is predominantly made up of Art Deco and Modernist buildings. While Modernist buildings in the past have not been recognised, their contribution to the architectural and social fabric of the area is increasingly being acclaimed and the City has updated its inventory for the Potts Point Heritage Conservation Area to include interwar and post war buildings and is reviewing the status of post war apartment buildings across the local government area for contributory status.

The Chimes was designed by eminent modernist architect, Hugo Stossel, and is a typical modernist block. Adaptive options for the building that support heritage outcomes for Potts Point should be explored such as retaining the building while activating the area occupied by the car park and the Macleay Street facade.

The Chimes is a modernist building typical of Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay. It should not be considered "detracting" while the contribution of mid Century modernist architecture in the region is under examination.

Car Parking

The concept proposal includes 58 car parking spaces, 45 of which would be provided for residential homes. The provision is excessive, with more spaces than the number of residential homes proposed.

Potts Point is a service hub, with supermarkets, green grocers, medical clinics, restaurants, cafes, and shops. There is a train station and the central business district is a walk away, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Few people in Potts Point use cars with the area having very low car ownership with 55.9 percent of households not owning a car compared to 11.1 percent for Greater Sydney. Those working in the Kings Cross locality get to work predominantly by public transport or walking. Buildings with no car parking spaces in the inner city remain popular as more people give up driving.

Providing car parking spaces encourages car use and unnecessary car use only contributes to traffic congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while limiting future development potential in a region.

Governments at all levels are working to discourage car use and the City of Sydney is consulting on reduced maximum car parking provisions in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 to reflect new public transport infrastructure and existing levels of car ownership.

The car parking spaces would be provided in three underground levels, creating the need for extensive excavation works. Adjacent residents are understandably concerned about construction impacts. These works are unnecessary because the car parking provisions are excessive.

Car parking provisions should be significantly reduced.

The concept proposal does not justify the proposed increase in bulk and scale: the outcomes represent a decrease in low-cost housing and overall housing stock. It is inconsistent with the aims of the in-fill affordable housing provisions and policies to increase housing supply.

Could you please refuse the concept proposal?

Could you please ensure this letter is taken as an objection for the purposes of the department's environmental impact assessment?

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney