

Department of Planning

MP09_0044 - Park Hyatt - Internal refurbishment, external alterations, amendment

Submission from Millicent Chalmers, 29 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point, NSW 2000

I should like to make the following submission asking that the above application for approval be entirely refused. The proposal is a commercial proposition which would do extensive damage to one of the premier heritage sites in Australia.

1. Problems with the procedure

Residents have found the procedure not to be adequate for a development with such a negative impact. The consultation was limited and not completely frank. Extracting information in regard to previous applications was expensive and extremely slow. This was unusual in a process which allow such a limited time for resident submissions.

2. Heritage

The proposal ignores the outstanding heritage value of the site. It is acknowledged at National, State and City Council levels as being extremely significant. It is part of a declared heritage precinct and is noted in the 2005 LEP. Residents worked hard to ensure that the heritage implications were acknowledged by the declaration of the precinct. They understand the place that it holds in the history of the establishment and growth of European settlement of this country. We insist that respect should be shown for the site and its environment.

Australia is an island continent. Its maritime history is a major part of its past. Dawes Point and the houses along Lower Fort Street played a major part in that early history. This proposal attempts to impair the views from Dawes Point of the harbour and the surrounding suburbs and parks. This is unacceptable as a denial of heritage.

3. The amenity of the park

Residents live on the fringe of the CBD. Nearly all the dwellings are terraces and high rise apartments. Open space is very much valued as an aspect of living which is essential to mental and physical health. The park is constantly used from soon after dawn until late at night. People walk their dogs, exercise, sit and look at the views, have picnics and enjoy the ambiance. We do not accept that this part of our lives should be encroached on so heavily for commercial purposes.

The park is also very popular with Australian and overseas visitors. It is an ideal place from which to enjoy the great variety of craft on the harbour and the beauty of the foreshores.

Mention has been made that the park is now used "semi-permanently" for the refurbishment of the Harbour Bridge. The people undertaking the work on the bridge have re-assured us many times that the works will proceed as quickly as is commensurate with the safety of the workers and the residents. The structures in the park will be taken away and the park restored to its usual standard. **All** the park should have its views in all directions protected.

4. The view from the harbour

When the hotel was being planned the necessity for it to complement the surrounding structures rather than intrude on them was discussed and Mr Woolley's excellent design

carefully followed the line of the cliff and its escarpment. This allowed people looking at Dawes Point to see the Georgian and Victorian houses and the park with its cannon and enjoy the echoes of early history. These views are particularly important from the ferries and cruise ships in the harbour.

What is being suggested would not only intrude on those views, but do so in such a fragmented and distracting way that the dignity and style of this area would be hidden from the people in surrounding areas of Sydney. This is not acceptable.